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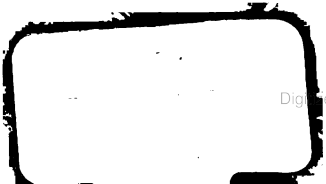
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Chaucer Society.

THE
Cambridge MS.

No. 4. 24.

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

CONTAINED IN THE EIGHTH MS. 2726 (AND HANDWRITTEN MS.)

EDITED BY
FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL,
ESQ.



LONDON

95

PRINTED FOR THE CHAUCER SOCIETY
BY KNOX, PAUL, TRENCH, PUGH & CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL, CHANCERY-LANE, LONDON.

1891

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301-1
no. 95

- XX. The Man of Law's Tale, from the Lansdowne MS. Part III.
(each with woodcuts of fourteen drawings of Tellers of Tales in the Ellesmere MS.)
- XXI. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part I:—1. 'The Dethe of *Blanche the Duchesse*,' from Thynne's ed. of 1632, the Fairfax MS 16, and Tanner MS 346; 2. 'the Complaynt to Pitee,' 3. 'the Parliament of Foules,' and 4. 'the Complaynt of Mars,' each from six MSS.
- XXII. Supplementary Parallel-Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part I, containing 1. 'The Parliament of Foules,' from three MSS. [Reprinted in LIX, First Series.]
- XXIII. Odd Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part I, containing 1. two MS fragments of 'The Parliament of Foules;' 2. the two differing versions of 'The Prologue to the Legende of Good Women,' arranged so as to show their differences; 3. an Appendix of Poems attributed to Chaucer, i. 'The Balade of Pitee by Chauciers;' ii. 'The Cronycle made by Chaucer,' both from MSS written by Shirley, Chaucer's contemporary.
- XXIV. A One-Text Print of Chaucer's Minor Poems, being the best Text from the Parallel-Text Edition, Part I, containing, I. The Dethe of *Blanche the Duchesse*, II. The Complaynt to Pitee, III. The Parliament of Foules, IV. The Complaynt of Mars, V. The ABC, with its original from De DeGuilleville's *Pelerinage de la Vie humaine* (edited from the best Paris MSS by M. Paul Meyer).

The issue for 1872, in the **First Series**, is,

- XXV. Chaucer's Tale of Melibe, the Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Wife of Bath's, Friar's, and Summoner's Tales, in 6 parallel Texts from the MSS above named, with the remaining 13 coloured drawings of Tellers of Tales, after the originals in the Ellesmere MS, and with Specimens of the Variations of 30 MSS in the Doctor-Pardoner Link. (Six-Text, Part IV.)
- XXVI. The Wife's, Friar's, and Summoner's Tales, from the Ellesmere MS, with 9 woodcuts of Tale-Tellers. (Part IV.)
- XXVII. The Wife's, Friar's, Summoner's, Monk's, and Nun's-Priest's Tales, from the Hengwrt MS, with 23 woodcuts of the Tellers of the Tales. (Part III.)
- XXVIII. The Wife's, Friar's, and Summoner's Tales, from the Cambridge MS, with 9 woodcuts of Tale-Tellers. (Part IV.)
- XXIX. A Treatise on the Astrolabe, addressed to his son Lowys, in 1391 A.D., by Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by the Rev. Prof. Walter W. Skeat, M.A.

The issue for 1873, in the **First Series**, is,

- XXX. The Six-Text Canterbury Tales, Part V, containing the Clerk's and Merchant's Tales.

The issue for 1874, in the **First Series**, is,

- XXXI. The Six-Text, Part VI, containing the Squire's and Franklin's Tales
- XXXII. The Clerk's, Merchant's, Squire's, Franklin's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Second Nun's Tales, Ellesmere MS, Part V.
- XXXIII. The Clerk's, Merchant's, Squire's, Franklin's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Second Nun's Tales, Cambridge MS, Part V.
- XXXIV. Squire's, Wife of Bath's, Friar's, Summoner's, Clerk's, Merchant's, Franklin's Tales, Corpus MS, Part IV.
- XXXV. Squire's, Merchant's, Wife of Bath's, Friar's, Summoner's, Clerk's, Franklin's, Second Nun's Tales, Petworth MS, Part IV.
- XXXVI. Squire's, Wife of Bath's, Friar's, Summoner's, Clerk's, Merchant's, Franklin's Tales, Lansdowne MS, Part IV.

The issue for 1875, in the **First Series**, is,

- XXXVII. The Six-Text, Part VII, the Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, and Manciple's Tales, with the Blank-Parson Link.
- XXXVIII. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Manciple's Tales, Ellesmere MS, Part VI.
- XXXIX. Manciple's, Man of Law's, Squire's, Merchant's, Franklin's, Second Nun's, Clerk's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus Tales, Hengwrt MS, Part IV.
- XL. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Manciple's Tales, Cambridge MS, Part VI.
- XLI. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Manciple's Tales, Corpus MS, Part V.
- XLII. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Doctor's, Pardoner's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Manciple's Tales, Petworth MS, Part V.
- XLIII. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Manciple's Tales, Lansdowne MS, Part V.

XLIV. A detailed Comparison of the *Troilus and Criseyde* with Boccaccio's *Filosttrato*, with a Translation of all Passages used by Chaucer, and an Abstract of the Parts not used, by W. Michael Rossetti, Esq., and with a print of the *Troilus* from the Harleian MS 3943. Part I.

XLV. Rymer-Index to the Ellesmere MS of the *Canterbury Tales*, by Henry Cromie, Esq., M.A. In 8vo for the separate Ellesmere MS.

XLVI. Rymer-Index to the Ellesmere MS, by Henry Cromie, Esq., M.A. In Royal 4to for the *Six-Text*.

XLVII. Notes and Corrections for the 8vo Rymer-Index, by H. Cromie, Esq., M.A.

The issue for 1876, in the *First Series*, is,

XLVIII. Autotype Specimens of the Chief Chaucer MSS, Part I, 16 Autotypes, with a Note on the MSS, by Dr. F. J. Furnivall.

The issue for 1877, in the *First Series*, is,

XLIX. The *Six-Text*, Part VIII, containing the Parson's Tale, with a Table of its Contents; and Mr Cromie's Notes and Corrections for the 4to Rymer-Index.

L—LV. L. The Parson's Tale, Ellesmere MS, Part VII; LI. Hengwrt MS, Part V; LII. Cambridge MS, Part VII; LIII. Corpus MS, Part VI; LIV. Petworth MS, Part VI; LV. Lansdowne MS, Part VI.

The issue for 1878, in the *First Series*, is,

LVI. Autotype Specimens of the Chief Chaucer MSS, Part II: 9 from the Cambridge MS Gg. 4. 27, and 1 from Lord Leconfield's MS.

LVII. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II:—5. The *A B C*, from 6 MSS; 6. The *Mother of God*, from 3 MSS; 7. *Anelida and Arcyte*, from 5 MSS and Caxton's print; 8. The *Former Age*, from 2 MSS (with the Latin original, and Chaucer's prose Englishing); 9. To his *Scrivener* from Shirley's MS and Stowe's print; 10. The *House of Fame*, from 2 MSS and Caxton's and Thynne's prints.

The issue for 1879, in the *First Series*, is,

LVIII. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part III, completing the *Parallel-Text*, and containing, 11. The *Legend of Good Women* from 5 MSS and Thynne's print; 12. *Truth* from 6 MSS; 13. The *Complaynt of Venus* from 6 MSS; 14. The *Envoy to Scogan* from 3 MSS; 15. *Marriage*, or *The Envoy to Bukton*, from 1 MS and Notary's and Thynne's prints; 16. *Gentillesse* from 6 MSS; 17. *Proverbs* from 3 MSS; 18. *Stedfastness* from 6 MSS; 19. *Fortune* from 6 MSS; 20. *Chaucer to his empty Purse*, from 6 MSS.

The issue for 1880, in the *First Series*, is,

LIX. Supplementary Parallel-Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II:—1a. The *Parlament of Foules* from 3 MSS; 2. The *A B C* from 6 MSS; 3. *Anelida and Arcyte* from 6 MSS; 4. The *Legend of Good Women*, in whole or part from 4 MSS; 5. The *Complaint of Mars* from 3 MSS; 6. *Truth* from 6 MSS; 7. The *Complaynt of Venus* from 3 MSS; 8. *Gentillesse* from 3 MSS; 9. *Lack of Stedfastness* from Thynne's print and 2 MSS; 10. *Fortune* from 2 MSS and Caxton's print.

LX. Odd-Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II, containing, 3. The *A B C*, from 2 MSS; 4. The *House of Fame*, from the Pepys' MS, &c.; 5. The *Legend of Good Women* from 3 MSS; 6. The *Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse* from 1 MS; 7. The *Complaint to Pity* from 2 MSS; 8. The *Parlament of Foules* from 1 MS; 9. *Truth* from 3 MSS; 10. *Envoy to Scogan* from 1 MS; 11. *Purse* from 1 MS.

LXI. A One-Text Print of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II, containing, VI. *Mother of God*; VII. *Anelida*; VIII. The *Former Age*; IX. *Adam Scrivener*; X. The *House of Fame*; XI. *Legende*; XII. *Truth*; XIII. *Venus*; XIV. *Scogan*; XV. *Marriage*; XVI. *Gentillesse*; XVII. *Proverbs*; XVIII. *Stedfastness*; XIX. *Fortune*; XX. *Purse*.

LXII. Autotype Specimens of the chief Chaucer MSS. Part III: 2 from Henry V's MS of the *Troilus*, when he was Prince of Wales (now Mr Bacon Frank's); 1 from Shirley's MS of the *ABC* at Sion Coll.

The issue for 1881, in the *First Series*, is,

LXIII. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's *Troilus & Criseyde* from the Campsall MS, b. 1415 A.D. (written for Henry V when Prince of Wales), Harleian MS. 2280, and Cambr. Univ. Libr. Gg. 4. 27. Part I. Books 1 and 2.

The issue for 1882, in the *First Series*, is,

LXIV. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's *Troilus & Criseyde* from the Campsall MS, before 1415 A.D. (written for Henry V when Prince of Wales), Harleian MS. 2280, and Cambr. Univ. Libr. Gg. 4. 27. Part II. Books 3, 4, 6.

The issue for 1883, in the *First Series*, is,

LXV. Part II of Mr W. M. Rossetti's Comparison of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* with Boccaccio's *Filosttrato*, completing the work.

The issue for 1884, in the *First Series*, is to be,

LXVI—LXXI. 6 Appendixes to the 6 MSS of the *Six-Text*, with Wood-cuts and colored Lithographs of 6 Tellers of Tales and of 6 emblematical Figures from the Cambridge Univ. MS, Gg. 4. 27, &c., and Process Engravings, for the

Ellesmere MS Part, of the 23 Ellesmere MS Miniatures. The Hengwrt MS, Part VI, contains The Canon's Yeoman's Tale from the Lichfield MS.
 LXXII. The Six-Text, Part IX, with colored Lithographs of 6 Tellers of Tales and 6 emblematical Figures from the Cambridge Unvers. MS Gg. 4.27; Forewords, Title-pages for the three volumes, &c.; and Prof. Hiram Corson's Index to the Subjects and Names of *The Canterbury Tales*.

The issue for 1885, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXIII. The Harleian MS 7334 of *The Canterbury Tales*, with Woodcuts of 23 Tellers of Tales from the Ellesmere MS, &c.

LXXIV. Autotype Specimens of the chief Chaucer MSS. Pt IV. The Ellesmere.

The issue for 1886, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXV. Chaucer's *Boece* from the Cambridge University MS. li. 3. 21.
 LXXVI. Chaucer's *Boece* from the Additional MS 10,340 in the British Museum, as edited by the Rev. Dr. R. Morris for the E. E. Text Soc. in 1868.

LXXVII. More Odd Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, containing, 1. *The Complainte to Pite*; 2. *The Complaint of the Anelida and Arcite*; 3. *Truth*; 4. *Lack of Steadfastness*; 5. *Fortune*; 6. *Purse*. Appendix: I. *The Balade of Pite*. II. *Roundels (Mercilesse Beaute)*.

The issue for 1887, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXVIII. A *Ryme-Index to Chaucer's Minor Poems*, by Miss Isabel Marshall and Miss Lela Porter, in Royal 4to for the *Parallel-Text*.

The issue for 1888, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXIX. A One-Text Print of Chaucer's *Troilus*, from the Campesall MS bef. 1415 A.D.

The issue for 1889, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXX. A *Ryme-Index to Chaucer's Minor Poems*, by Miss Isabel Marshall and Miss Lela Porter, in 8vo for the One-Text print of the *Minor Poems*.

The issue for 1890, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXXI. *Parallel-Text Specimens of all accessible unprinted Chaucer MSS: The Pardoner's Prolog and Tale*, edited by Prof. Zupitza, Ph.D. Part I, from 7 MSS: Cambridge Dd. 4. 24, Christ-Church, Additional 5140, Devonshire, Haistwell (or Egerton 3726), Ingilby, Northumberland: the Dd. Group.
 LXXXII. *The Romaunt of the Rose*, from Thynne's print, 1532, ed. F. J. Furnivall.

The issue for 1891, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXXIII. A Parallel text of *The Romaunt of the Rose* (of which the first 1706 lines are most probably Chaucer's), from the unique MS at Glasgow, and its French original, *Le Roman de la Rose*, edited by Dr Max Kaluza. Part I.
 LXXXIV. A Rime-Index to Chaucer's *Troilus*, by Prof. Skeat, Litt.D.

The issue for 1892, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXXV. *Parallel-Text Specimens of all accessible unprinted Chaucer MSS: The Pardoner's Prolog and Tale*, edited by Prof. Zupitza, Ph.D. Part II, from 10 MSS.

The issue for 1893, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXXVI. *Parallel-Text Specimens of all accessible unprinted Chaucer MSS: The Pardoner's Prolog and Tale*, edited by Prof. Zupitza, Ph.D. Part III, from 6 MSS.

The issue for 1894, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXXVII. A Parallel-Text of 3 more MSS of Chaucer's *Troilus*, the St. John's and Corpus, Cambridge, and Harl. 1239. Brit. Mus., put forth by Dr. F. J. Furnivall. Part I, with a Note by G. C. Macaulay, M.A.

The issue for 1895, in the **First Series**, is,
 LXXXVIII. A Parallel-Text of 3 more MSS of Chaucer's *Troilus*, Part II.

The issue for 1896, in the **First Series**, will be,
 LXXXIX. Prof. McCormick's Introduction to Chaucer's *Troilus*, discussing its MSS, its Text, its Metre and Grammar: 2nd Parallel-Texts, Part III.

The issue for 1897, in the **First Series**, is,
 XC. *Parallel-Text Specimens of all accessible unprinted MSS: The Pardoner's Prolog and Tale*, Part IV, from 17 MSS, edited by the late Prof. Zupitza, Ph.D., and Prof. John Koch, Ph.D.

The issue for 1898, in the **First Series**, is,
 XCI. *Parallel-Text Specimens*, Part V: *The Pardoner's Prolog and Tale*, a Six-Text, from 3 MSS and 3 black-letters, edited by Prof. John Koch, Ph.D., and Dr. F. J. Furnivall.

The issue for 1899, in the **First Series**, is,
 XCII. *Parallel-Text Specimens*, Part VI: *The Clerk's Tale*, a Six-Text Print from 6 MSS not containing *The Pardoner's Tale*, put forth by Dr. F. J. Furnivall.

The issue for 1900, 1901, and 1902, in the **First Series**, will be,
 XCIII. *Parallel-Text Specimens*, Part VII: *The Clerk's Tale* from the Phillippis MS 8299 and the Longleat MS, with an Introduction on all the Specimens of the Clerk's Tale, by Prof. John Koch, Ph.D.

XCIV. *Parallel-Text Specimens*, Part VIII: *The Pardoner's Prolog and Tale* from the Hodson MS 39, put forth by Dr. F. J. Furnivall, with an Introduction by Prof. John Koch, Ph.D.

- XCV. The Cambridge Dd. 4. 24. MS of the Canterbury Tales, completed by the Egerton MS 2726 (the Haistwell MS), ed. F. J. Furnivall. Part I.
- XCVI. The Cambridge Dd. 4. 24. MS of the Canterbury Tales, completed by the Egerton MS 2726 (the Haistwell MS), ed. F. J. Furnivall. Part II.

SECOND SERIES.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1868** is,

1. *Early English Pronunciation*, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part I. This work includes an amalgamation of Prof. F. J. Child's two Papers on the use of the final *-e* by Chaucer (in T. Wright's ed. of *The Canterb. Tales*) and by Gower (in Dr Pauli's ed. of the *Confessio Amantis*).

2. *Essays on Chaucer, his Words and Works*, Part I.: 1. Prof. Ebert's Review of Sandras's *Etude sur Chaucer*, translated by J. W. van Rees Hoets, M.A.; 2. A 13th-century Latin Treatise on the *Chilindre* (of the *Shipman's Tale*), edited by Mr. E. Brock.

3. A Temporary Preface to the Society's Six-Text edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Part I, attempting to show the right Order of the Tales, and the Days and Stages of the Pilgrimage, &c. &c., by F. J. Furnivall, Esq., M.A.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1869** is,

4. *Early English Pronunciation*, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part II.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1870** is,

5. *Early English Pronunciation*, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part III.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1871** is,

6. *Trial-Forewords to my Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems* for the Chaucer Society (with a try to set Chaucer's Works in their right order of Time), by Fredk. J. Furnivall. Part I.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1872** is,

7. *Originals and Analogues of some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Part I. 1. The original of the *Man of Law's Tale* of Constance, from the French Chronicle of Nicholas Trivet, Arundel MS 66, ab. 1340 A.D., collated with the later copy, ab. 1400, in the National Library at Stockholm; copied and edited, with a translation, by Mr. Edmund Brock. 2. The Tale of "Merelaus the Emperor," englisht from the *Gesta Romanorum* by Thomas Hoccleve, in Harl. MS 7333; and 3. Part of Matthew Paris's *Vita Offe Primi*, both stories illustrating incidents in the *Man of Law's Tale*. 4. Two French Fabliaux like the *Reeve's Tale*. 5. Two Latin Stories like the *Friar's Tale*.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1873** is,

8. Albertano of Brescia's *Liber Consilii et Consolationis*, A.D. 1246 (the Latin source of the French original of Chaucer's *Melibe*), edited from the MSS, by Dr. Thor Sundby.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1874** is,

9. *Essays on Chaucer, his Words and Works*, Part II.: 3. John of Hoveden's *Practica Chilindri*, edited from the MS, with a translation, by Mr. E. Brock. 4. Chaucer's use of the final *-e*, by Joseph Payne, Esq. 5. Mrs. E. Barrett-Browning on Chaucer: being those parts of her review of the *Book of the Poets*, 1842, which relate to him; here reprinted by leave of Mr Robert Browning. 6. Professor Bernhard Ten-Brink's critical edition of Chaucer's *Complayntes to Pite*.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1875** is,

10. *Originals and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Part II. 6. Alphon-sus of Lincoln, a Story like the *Prioress's Tale*. 7. How Reynard caught Chanticleer, the source of the *Nun's-Priest's Tale*. 8. Two Italian Stories, and a Latin one, like the *Pardoner's Tale*. 9. The Tale of the Priest's Bladder, a story like the *Summoner's Tale*, being 'Li dis de le Vescie a Prestre', par Jakes de Basiw. 10. Petrarch's Latin Tale of Griseldis (with Boccaccio's Story from which it was re-told), the original of the *Clerk's Tale*. 11. Five Versions of a Pear-tree Story like that in the *Merchant's Tale*. 12. Four Versions of The Life of Saint Cecilia, the original of the *Second Nun's Tale*. Edited by F. J. Furnivall.

11. *Early English Pronunciation*, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part IV.

12. *Life-Records of Chaucer*, Part I, The Robberies of Chaucer by Richard Brerelay and others at Westminster, and at Hatcham, Surrey, on Tuesday, Sept. 6, 1390, with some Account of the Robbers, from the Enrolments in the Public Record Office, by Walford D. Selby, Esq., of the Public Record Office.

13. Thynne's Animadversions (1599) on Speght's *Chaucers Workes*, re-edited from the unique MS, by Fredk. J. Furnivall, with fresh Lives of William and Francis Thynne, and the only known fragment of *The Pilgrims Tale*.

GROUP A. FRAGMENT I.

§ 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE.

CAMBRIDGE MS. Dd. 4. 24 (copied by Wytton),

Completed by **Egerton MS. 2726** (the Haistwell MS.) from which
are Lines 1-252, 505-758, 920-1170, 1502-1931, 2927-3016, etc.

Its tags to final ð, f, g' and k' are not printed.

W Han that Aprill with his shoures soote (**Eg. 2726**, leaf 1)
The draught of Marche hath pershed þe roote
And bathed euery veyn in swliche licour
Of soche vertue engendred is þe floure 4
And 3epherus eke with his swete breth
Enspired hath in euery holt and heth
The tendre croppes and the yonge soñ
Hath in the Ram half his cours ron 8
And smale foules make melody
That slepe aȝt night with open Ie
So prekketh hem nature in hir corage
Than longeth yt folk to go on pilgremage 12
And Palmers for to seche straunge strondes
To ferne halowes couthe in sondry londes
And specially from euery shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury þei wende 16
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holp when they were seke
So byfyȝt yt þat seson on a day
In southwerk at þe Tabard as I lay 20
Redy to wende on my pilgremage
To Caunterbury with fuȝt deuou[t]¹ corage ^{1 MS. rubd}
That night was com[e]¹ in to our hostry
Wele xxix in a company 24
Of diuers folk by auenture yfah
In felyshipe and pilgrymes were they aȝt
And toward Caunterbury wold þei ryde

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

B

The chambres and stables weren wyde 28
 And wele were we esed at the best
 And shortly when þe son went to rest
 So hade I spoke with hem euerychone
 That I was of her felyshippe anone 32
 And made foreward erly to aryse
 To take our wey as I shaft you deuise
 But neuertheless while I haue tyme and space
 Er þat I in þis tale ferther pace 36
 Me thinketh yt accordyng were to reson
 To telle you all the condicon
 Of ecch of hem so as it semeth me
 And whiche they were and of what degre 40
 And eke of what array þei were in [leaf 1, back]
 And at a knight þan wol I ferst begynne
A Knight þere was and þat a worthy man 44
 þat fro þe tyme þat he first began
 To ryde out he loued chivalrye
 Trewth honour fredome and curtesye
 And there-to hade he ryden no man so ferre
 ffuþ worthy was he in his lorles werre 48
 As wele in cristendome as in hethnesse
 And euer honour for his worthynesse
 At alisaundre he was / whan it was won
 ffuþ often tymes hade he / the boorde bygon 52
 Aboue all nacions / in Spruce
 In lettow hade he be and in Ruce
 No cristen man so oft in his degre
 In Garnard eke at the sege hade he be 56
 In Algaryse and rydyn in Belmary
 At Lyaies hade he be and at Sataly
 When they were wonne and in þe grete se
 At many a noble aryve hade he bee 60
 At mortaiþ batailles hade he be xv
 And fought for our feith at Tramysse
 Within þe lyestes iij and ay sleyn his fo

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

This ilk worthy knight hade be also 64
 Somtyme with the lord of Palacye
 Ageyns an other hethen in Turkye
 And euermore he hade a soueraigne pryse
 And though he were worthy he was wyse 68
 And of his port as meke as a meide
 He neuer yit no velany seide
 In all his lyf vn-to no manere wyght
 He was a verrey perfite gentell knight 72
 And for to telle you of his array
 his hors was gode but him self was nat gay
 Of fustyan he wered a gepon
 All besmotered with his habergeon 76
 ffor he was late come fro his viage
 And went to do his pilgremage
 With hym pere was his son a yong squyer 80
 A lovier and a lusty bacheler
 With lokkes cruft as they were leyde in presse [leaf 2]
 Of xx yere of age he was as I gesse
 Of his stature he was of even lengthe
 And wonderly deliuere and grete of strengthe 84
 And he hade be somtyme in chiuache
 In flaundres Artoys and in pycarde
 And born hym wele as of his liteH space
 In hope to stonde in his lady grace 88
 Embrouded was he as yt were a mede
 All full of fressh floures white and rede
 Syngyng he was or floytyng all the day
 He was as fressh as ys the monthe of May 92
 Short was his gown with sleeves longe and wyde
 Wele coude he sit an hors and feire ride
 he coude eke songes make and wele endite
 Iuste and daunce portray and eke write 96
 And so hote he loued pat by nyghtertale
 He slepe no more þan doth the nyghtyngale
 Curteys he was lowly and seruisable

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

He carf byfore his fadre at the table 100

Ayoman hade he and *seruauntes* nomo
 At þat tyme for hym lyst to ryde so
 And was aH cladde in cote and hode of grene
 A sheef of pecok arowes bryght and shene 104
 vndre his belt he bare fuH thriftyly
 Wele coude he dresse his takle and yomanly
 His arowes drouped nat with fedres lowe
 And in his hande he bare a myghty bowe 108
 A not hede he hade with a broun visage
 Of wode craft wele koude he aH þe vsage
 Vp-on his arme he bare a gay bracere
 And by his syde a swerde and a bokelere 112
 And on þat other syde a gay daggere
 Harnest wele as sharpe as pointe of spere
 A *christofre* on his brest of silver shene
 An horn he bare · þe baudryk was of grene 116
 A foster he was sethly as I gesse

There was also a nonne a prioresse
 That of hir smylyng was fuH symple and coy
 hir grettest othe was but by seint Loy 120
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne [leaf 2, back]
 ffuH wele she song the *seruice* devyne
 Entuned in hir voyse fuH semely
 And frensh she spake feire and fetysly 124
 After þe scole of Stratford at þe bowe
 ffor frensh of Parys was to hir vnknowe
 At þe mete wele taught was she with aH
 She lete no morseH fro hir lyppes falle 128
 Ne wet hir fyngers in hir sauce depe
 Wele koude she cary a morseH and wele kepe
 That no droppe ne feH vp on hir brest
 In curtesye was set fuH moche hir lest 132
 Hir ouerlyppe wyped she so elene
 That in hir cuppe þere was no ferthing sene
 Of grece and whan she hade dronke hir draught

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

ffuht semly after hir mete she raucht 136

And sekerly she was of grete disport

And fuht plesaunt and amiable of port

And peined hir to countrefeit chere

Of court for to be statelyche of manere 140

And for to be holde digne of reuerence

And for to speke of hir conscience

She was so charitable and pitous

She wold wepe yf þat she saw a mous 144

Caught in a trap yf þat it were dede or bled

Of smale houndes hade she þat she fedde

With rosted flessch or mylk and wasteht brede

But sore wepte she yf ony of hem were dede 148

Or yf men smote it with yerde smerte

And aht was conscience and tendre herte

ffuht semely hir wymple pynched was

Hir nose tretise hir yen grey as glas 152

Hir mouthe fuht smaht and þer-to softe and rede

But sekerly she hade a feire forehede

ffor hardely she was nat vndregrowe

It was almost a span brede I trowe 156

ffuht setyse was hir cloke as I was ware

Of smaht coraht about hir arme she bare

A peire of bedes gauded aht with grene

And þere-on lyng a broche of gold fuht shene 160

On which was first write a crowned A [leaf 8]

And after amor vincit omnia

An other nonne with hir hade she

That was hir Chapelyn and prestes iij 164

A monke þere was a feire for þe maistry

An outryder þat loued venery

A manly man to be an Abbot able

ffor many a deinty hors hade he in his stable 168

And whan he rode men myght his brideht here

Gyngelyng in a whistelyng wynde as clere

And eke as loude as doth þe Chapeht beht

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

There as the lord was keper of þe seH 172
 The rewle of seint Maure or of sciut Benet
 By-cause it was olde and somdele streyt
 This ilk monke lete olde thinges passe
 And helde after þe newe world his space 176
 He gaue nat at þat tixt a pulled hen
 That seith þat honnters be nat holy men
 Ne þat a monke whan he is recheles
 Ys lykned to a fyssh þat is waterles 180
 This is to seyn a monke out of his cloystre
 But þat tixt helde I nought worth an oystre
 And I seide his oppenyon was gode
 What shold he stody and make hym self wode 184
 Vp-on a boke in Cloystre aH wey to pore
 Or swynke with his hondes and labore
 As Austyn bit ya how shaft þe world be serued
 Lete Austyn haue his swynk to hym reserued 188
 þerfore he was a prykasour aryght
 Greyhoundes he hade as swyft as foule of flyght
 On prekyng and huntyng for the hare
 Was aH his lust for no thing wold he spare 192
 I sawe his sleeves purfyled at þe hande
 With gryse and þat þe fynest of a londe
 And for to festyn his hode vndre his chyn
 He hade of gold wrought a fuH coryous pyn 196
 A loue knot in þe gretter ende þere was
 His hede was balled þat shone as ony glas
 And eke his face as he hade ben anynte
 He was a lord fuH fat and in good poynte 200
 His yen stepe were and rolyng in his hede. [leaf 3, back]
 That stemed as a fourneys of a lede
 His botes souple his hors in grete state
 Now certainly he was a feire prelate 204
 He was nought pale as a forpynded gost
 A fat swan loved he best of any rost
 His palfray was as broun as a bery

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

A frere pere was a wanton and a mery 208
 A lymytour and a full solempne man
 In þe orders iiij · ys now so wele þat can
 So moche of daliaunce and feire langage
 He hade made full many a feire mariage 212
 Of yong wommen at his owen coste
 Vn-to his ordre he was a noble poste
 full wele beloved and famuler was he
 with fraunkleyns ouer all in his contre 216
 And with worthy wommen of þe toun
 ffor he hadde power of confession
 [.
 no gap in the MS.] 220
 ffor swetely herde he confession
 And plesaunt was his absolucon
 he was an esy man to yeve penaunce
 There as he wist to haue a gode petauunce 224
 ffor vn-to a poure ordre for to geve
 Ys syngne þat a man ys wele shreve
 ffor yf he gaf he durst make auauzt
 He wist þat a man was repentaunt 228
 ffor many a man so herde ys of his hert
 He may nought wepe all þough hym sore smert
 Therefore in-stede of penaunce and prayers
 Men most yeve silver to þe poure freres 232
 His typpet / was ay farsed full of knyves
 And pynnes for to yeve feire wyves
 And certainly he hade a mery note
 Wele coude he syng and pley on a rote 236
 Of yeddynges he bare outerly þe prys
 His nek was white as a floure delys
 Therto he was stronge as a champyon
 He knewe the tauernes wele in euery toun 240
 And euery hostiller and tapstere
 Better þan a laser or a beggere
 ffor vn-to soch a worthy man as he

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Accordeth nought as by his faculte [Eg. 2726, leaf 4] 244
 To haue with seke lasers acqueyntaunce
 It is nought honest yt may nought auaunce
 ffor to dele with soch poraylle
 But all with ryche and sellers of vitaylle 248
 And ouer all pere profit shold aryse
 Curteys he was and lowely of seruyce
 There was no man no where so vertuous
 He was þe best begger in his hous 252
 [. 252 b
 no gap in the MS.] [Eg. 2726 ends] 252 c
 ffor though a wydewe / had nouzt a shoo [Dd. 4. 24 begins,
 leaf 6; leaves 1-5
 gone. The tags to
 d, f, g, k, r, t are
 disregarded.]
 So plesant was his / In principio
 3et wold he haue / a ferthyng or he went
 his purchas was wel betir / than his rent 256
 And rage he coude / as it had be a whelp
 In louedayes / there coude he meche help
 ffor there he was / nat lyke a Cloisterere
 with a thredbare Cope / as is a pore scolere 260
 But he was like a Maister / or a Pope
 Of double worstede / was his semy Cope
 Rounde / as any belle / ouzt of the presse
 Somwhat he lisped / for his wantounesse 264
 To make his englyssh / swete on his tonge
 And in his harpyng / whan that he songe
 hys eyen twynkeled / in his hede a-right
 As don the sterres / in a frosty nyght 268
 This worthy lymytour / was cleped Huberd
 A Marchaunnt pere was / with a forked berd A Mar-
 chaunnt
 In motlee / and heye on hors he satte
 And on his heued / a flaundryssh beuer hatte 272
 His botes clasped / faire and fetisly
 His resons he spak / ful solempnely
 Sownyng alwey / the encres of his wynnyng
 He wold þe see were kepte / for any thyng 276
 By-twene Midelburgh / and Orewelle

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

wel coude he / in eschaunges / sheldes selle
 This worthy man / ful wel / his wyt bysette
 There wist no wyght / that he was in dette 280

So stedefastly dede he / of his gouernance
 with his bargeyns / and with his cheuysance
 ffor sothe he was / a worthy man with alle
 But sothe to seyn / I ne wot how men him calle 284

A Clerk ther was / of Oxenford also ¶ A Clerk
 That vnto logyk / had longe I-go
 And lene was his hors / as it were a rake
 And he was nouȝt right fat / I yndertake 288

But loked holwe / and ther-to soberly
 fful thredbare was his ouerest Courteby
 ffor he had ȝet / geten him no benefice
 Ne was nouȝt wordly / to haue an Office 292

ffor him was leuer / haue / at his beddis hede
 Twenty bokes clad / in blak and in rede [leaf 6, back]

Of Aristotle / and his philosophie
 Than riche robes / or fethil or sautrie 296

But al be it though / he were a Philosophre
 ȝet had he but litel / gold in his coffre
 But al þat he / from his frendis hent
 On bokes and on lernyng / he it spent/ 300

And bisily gan / for the soules pray
 Of hem / þat ȝaf him / wherwith to scoley
 Of stody tok he / most cure and hede
 Nouȝt a word spak he / more than was nede 304

And þat was seide / in fourme and reuerence
 And short and quyk / & ful of heigh sentence
 Sownyng in moral vertue / was his speche.
 And gladly wold he lerne / and gladly teche 308

A Sergeaunt of lawe / there was / war & wys ¶ A ser-
 That ful often had ben / at Pardys geant of
 That was ful riche / of excellence lawe

Discrete he was / and of gret reuerence 312
 he semed swich / his wordes were so wyse

Justice had he be / ful often in assise
 Both by patent / and pleyn comissioun
 ffor his science / and his heigh renoun 316
 Of fees and robes / had he many on
 So grete a purchasour / was nowher non
 Al was fee simple / to him in effect
 His purchasyng / myght nat ben / in suspect 320
 Nowher so beay a man . as he there nas
 And ȝet he seemed / besiere than he was
 In termes had he cas / and domes alle
 That fro þe tyme / of kyng wiȝ / weren falle 324
 Ther-to he coude endyte / and make a thyng
 Ther coude no man pynche / at his writyng
 And euery statut / coude he / pleynly by rote
 He rod but homely / in a Medlee Cote 328
 Girt with a seynt of silk / with barres smale
 Of his array / telle I / no lengere tale
 A frankleyn þere was / in this compaignye ¶ A fran-
 whyt was his berd / as is the daysye keleyn
 Of his complexion / he was sangweyn 333
 wel loued he by the morwe / a soppe in vyn
 To lyue in delyt / was euere his wōne
 ffor he was Epiours / owen sone [leaf 7] 336
 That held opynyōn / that pleyn delit
 was verray / felicite parfyt
 An housholdere / and þat a gret was he
 The grettest / of al his contre 340
 his brede his ale / was alwey after one
 A betir wyned man / was nowher none
 with-oute bake mete / was neuere his hous
 Of fyssh and flesch / and þat so plenteuous 344
 It sewed in his hous / of mete and drynke
 Of alle deyntes / þat eny man coude thynke
 After the sondry sesons / of the ȝere
 So chaunged he his mete / & his sopere 348
 fful many a fat partrich / had he in mue

And many a breme / & many a luce in stue
 wo was his coke / but if his sauce were
 Poynaunt and sharp / and redy al his gere 352
 his table durmaunt / in his hañ alwey
 Stod redy couered / al the long day
 At the sessiones / there was he lord and sire
 fful often tyme / he was knyght of the shire 356
 And an Anlaas / and a Gipciere al of silk
 Heng at his girdil / as whyt as morwe mylk
 A sherewe had he be / and a Countour
 was nowher swich / a worthy vauasour 360

An haberdassher / and a Carpenter ¶ An Haberdassher
 A webbere a dighere / and a tapicer ¶ A Carpenter
 And they were clothed / alle in oo lyuere ¶ A webbere
 Of a solempne / and gret fraternite ¶ A Dighere
 fful fressh and newe / her gere pyked was ¶ A Tapicer
 here knywes were nouȝt / chaped *with* bras
 But al *with* siluer / wrouȝt ful clene and wele
 here Girdeles / and here pouches / euerydele 368
 wel semed ich of hem / a fair Burgeys
 To sitte in the ȝildehalle / vp-on þe heye deys
 Euerych for the wysdom / that he can
 was shaply to be / an Alderman 372
 ffor catel hadden they I-nough and rent
 And eke here wyues / wold it wel assent /
 And ellis serteyn / they weren to blame
 It is ful feyr / to be cleped Madame 376
 And go to the vigiles / al byfore
 And haue a Mantel / rially bore [leaf 7, back]

ACoke they had / *with* hem for þe nones A Coke
 To boyle the Chikenys / *with* the Maribones 380
 And pouder Merchaunt / tart / and Galyngale
 wel coude he knowe / a draught of london ale
 he coude / roste / sethe / boille / and frye
 Make Mortrewes / and wel bake a pye 384
 But gret harm was it / as thouȝt me

That on his shyne / a mormal had he
 And blanchemangere / mad he *with* the best
 A Shipman there was / þat woned fer by west ¶ A Ship-
 ffor ought þat I wot / he was of Dertemouthe man
 he rod vp-on a Rouncey / as wel as he coude
 In a gowne of faldyng / vn-to the knee
 A daggere hangyng / on a lace had he 392
 A-boute his nekke / vndir his arme a-doun
 The hote somer / had mad his hew al broun
 And serteynly / he was a good felawe
 fful many a draught / of wyn / had he drawe 396
 ffro Burdeusward / whiles the chapmen slepe
 Of nyce conscience / toke he no kepe
 If þat he faught / and had the heyer hand
 Be water he sent it home / fro euery lond 400
 But to reken wel / of his craft the tydes
 The stremes and the strandes hym beside is
 his herberwe / his mone / and his lodes manage
 There was non swich / from hulle in-to cartage 404
 Hardy he was / and wys / I vndertake
with many a tempest / he had his berd shake
 He knew alle the hauenes / as they were
 ffro Gutlond / to the Cape de fenistre 408
 And euery Cryke / fro Bretaine in-to Spayne
 his Barge was called / the Magdaleyne
 W ith vs there was / a Doctour of Phisik A Doctour
 In al þis world / was non him lyk of phisyk
 To speke of Phesik / and of surgerie 413
 ffor he was grounde / in Astronome
 he kept his pacience / a ful gret dele
 In houres by his / magyk / naturele 416
 Wel coude he fortunen / the accident
 Of hise ymages / for be his pacient
 he knew the cause / of euery maladye
 wheiþer it were cold / hote / moist / or drye [leaf 8] 420
 and wher-of it engendered / and of what humour

he was a verray *parfyt* / practisour
 The cause he knew / and of his harm the rote
 A-non he *ȝaf* / the syke man his bote 424
 fful redy had he / alle hise appoticaries
 To sende him dragges / and his lettuaries
 ffor eche of hem / mad other for to wynne
 her ffrenshipe / was nat newe / to bygynne 428
 wel knew he / the old Esculapius
 And deiscorides / and eke Rusus
 Olde ypocras / and Galyen
 Serapyoun / *Razis* / and Auyzen 432
 Auerrois / Dasmacien / and Costantyn
 Bernard / Gatisden / and Gilbertyn
 Of his diete / mesurable was he
 ffor he was / of no superfluite 436
 But of gret norisshyng / and digestible
 his stody was but litel / in the bible
 In Sangweyn / and in pers / clad with-alle
 lyned with taffata / and sendalle 440
 And ȝet he was but esy of dispence
 ffor he kept þat he wan / in the pestilence
 ffor gold in phisyk / is a ccordiath
 Therefore he loued gold / in especiath. 444
 A good wyf *pere* was / of beside bathe ¶ the
 But she was somdel def / & þat was skathe Wyf of
 Of cloth makyng / she had swich an haunt Bathe
 That she passed hem / of ypris & of gaunt 448
 In a^{ll} the *paryssh* / wyf was there non
 That to offryng / a-forⁿ hire shuld gon
 And if there dide / serteyn so wroth was she
 That she was oute / of al charite 452
 Hire kerches / were of fyn ground
 I durst swere / they weyed down a pound
 That on the Sonday / were vp-on hire hede
 hire hosen were / of fyn skarlet rede 456
 fful streite teyed / and shoon moist & newe



Bold was hire face / and feir & rede of hewe
 She was a worthy womman / al hire lyue
 housbondes at þe chirche dore / had she had fyue 460
 With-oute other companye / in hire ȝouthe
 But ther-of nedeth nat / to speke of nouthe
 And thries had she ben / at Ierusalem [leaf 8, back]
 She had passed / many a straunge strem 464
 At Rome had she be / and at Bolyne
 In Galice at Seynt Iameȝ / and at Coloyne
 She coude meche / of wandryng by the weye
 Gat-tothed was she / sothly to seye 468
 Vp-on an aumblere / esily she sat
 Wel I-wympled / and on hire hed an hat
 As brod as is / a bokeler or a targe
 A fote mantel / aboute hire hepes large 472
 And on hire fete / a peire of spores sharpe
 In felashippe / coude she / laughe & carpe
 The remedies of loue / she coude per chaunce
 ffor of þat art / she knew þe olde daunce 476
A Good man þere was / of religion ¶ A Person
 That was a pore Person / of a toun
 But riche he was / of holy thouȝt and werke
 He was also / a lerned man / a clerke 480
 That cristes gospel / trewely wold preche
 His parissghyns deuoutly / wold he teche
 Benygne he was / and wonder diligent
 And in aduersite / ful abidyng / and pacient 484
 ffor which he was preued / often sithes
 fful lothe were him to curse / for his tithes
 But rather wold he ȝeuen / with-oute doute
 Vn-to his pore parissghyns / a-boute 488
 Of his offryng / and eke of his substance
 he coude in lital / thyng / haue suffisance
 Wyde was his parissgh / and houses fer a-sonder
 But he left nouȝt / for reyn ne for thonder 492
 In sekenesse and in myschef / to visite

GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. **Dd. & Egert.** 15

The ferthest / in his *pariss* / moche and lite
 Vp-on his feet / and in his hond a staf
 This noble ensaumple / to his shepe he ȝaf 496
 That first he wrouȝt / and afterward he taught
 Ouȝt of þe gospel / he tho wordes caught
 And this figure / he added eke ther-to
 That if gold rust / what shuld Iren do 500
 ffor if a preest be foul / on whom we trust
 no wonder is / a lewed man to rust
 And shame it is / if a preest take kepe 503
 To se a sheton shepherde / & a clene shepe [Dd. 4. 24 ends; leaves
9, 10, 11 gone]
 Wele aught a prest ensaumple for to yeve [Egerton begins,
on leaf 7]
 By his clenness how þat his shepe shold leve
 He set nought his benefice to hire
 And lete his shepe accombred in the mire 508
 Ne renne to london to Seint Poules
 To seche hym a chauntry for soules
 Or be *with* a bretherhede *with*hold
 But dwelled at home and kept wele his fold 512
 So þat þe wolf made þere no maistrye
 He was a shepard and not a *mersonarye*
 And though he holy were and *vertuous*
 He was nat *with* synfull men despitous 516
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne
 But in his speche discrete and benigne
 To drawen folk to heven by feirenesse
 By gode ensaumple þis was his besynesse 520
 But and he knewe ony *person* obstenate
 Whether he were hiegh or lowe astate
 Hym wold he snebbe for þe nones
 A better prest I trowe nowhere none ys [leaf 7, back] 524
 He awayted after no pompe ne reuerence
 Ne made hym a spiced conscience
 But cristes lore and his Appostels xij
 He caught but furst he folowed it *him* selve 528
 Wyth hym þere was a plowman was his brothere

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

That hade lad of dong many a fothere
 A trewe swynker and a gode was he
 Levying in pees and perfite charite 532
 God loued he best with all his hole hert
 At all tymes pough he gained or smert
 And þan his neighbour right as hym selue
 He wold thressh and þere-to dyke and delue 536
 ffor cristes sake for euery poure wight
 without hire yf it lay in his might
 His tithes payde he full faire and wele
 Both of his propre swynk and of his catele 540
 In a tabard he rode vp-on a mere
 There was also a Reve and a millere
 A sompnour and a pardoner also
 A maunciple and myself þere was no mo 544
The miller was a stout carle for þe nones
 ffuþ bigge he was of brawne and of bones
 That preueth wele for euer where he cam
 At the wrestellyng he wold haue þe ram 548
 He was short sholdred brode and a thik gnarre
 There was no dore but he yt wold lyft of barre
 Or breke it with rennyng with his hede
 His berde as ony fox . was rede 552
 And there-to brode as it were a spade
 Vp-on þe cop of his nose he hade
 A wert and þere-on stode a tuft of heirs
 Rede as the bristels of sow eryl 556
 His nosethrilles blak were and wyde
 A swerde and a bokeler bare he by his syde
 His mouthe was as grete as a fournesse
 he was a Iangler and golyardes 560
 And þat was most synne and harlottryes
 Wel coude he stele corne and tolle iij
 And yit he hade a thom of golde parde
 A white cote and a blewe hode wered he [leaf 8] 564
 A bagpipe wele koude he blawe and sowne

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

And therewith~~all~~ he brought vs out of towne

AgentyH Mansiple was there of a temple
Of which al¹ catours mighten take exemple 568
ffor to be wyse in bying of vitaiH [¹ al later]

ffor whether he paide or toke by taiH

Alwey he wayted so in his acate

That he was ay byforn and in gode state 572

Now is nat that of god a fuH feire grace

That soch a lewde mans witte shall passe

The wysdom of an hepe of lerned men

That maistres haue hade mo than iij. ten 576

That of lawe were expert and curious

Of which there were a dosen in þat hous

Worthy to be stewardes of rent and londe

Of ony lord that is in Ingelonde 580

To make hym leve by his propre gode

In honour douteles but yf he were wode

Or lyue as skarsly as hym lyst desire

And able to helpen att a shire 584

In ony cas þat myght falle or happe

And yit this manciple set her aller cappe

The reve was a sklendre coloryk man
his berde was shave as nygh as euer he can 588

His here was by his eres fuH rounde shorn

His top was dokked like a prest byforn

ffuH longe were his legges and fuH lene

Like a staf there was no calf a-sene 592

Wele koude he kepe a gerner and a byn [² coude, *overline*]

There was none auditour coude² on him wyn

Wele wist he by the drought and by the reyn

The yeldyng of his corn and of his greyn 596

His lordes shepe his nete his dayre

His swyne his hors his stok and his pultrye

Was holy in this reves gouernyng

And by his couenaunt he yaf þe rekenyng 600

Sen þat his lord was xx. yere of age

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

o

There koude no man bryng him in arrerage
 The was no baillyf herde ne other hyne
 That he ne knewe her sleight and her couyne [r. s, bk.] 604
 They were adradde of hym as of the dethe
 His wonyng was feire vp-on) an hethe
 with grene trees shadewed was his place
 he koude better þan his lord purchace 608
 ffuH riche he was astored priuely
 his lorde he koude plesse fuH subtelly
 To yeue and lene hym of his owen gode
 And haue a thank and yit a gowne and hode 612
 This Reve satte vp-on) a weH gode stot
 AH pomely grey and he hight scot
 lerned he hade in youth a gode meistere
 He was a gode wright a Carpentere 616
 A long surcote of Pers vp-on) he hade
 And by his syde he bare a lusty blade
 Of Norfolk was this Reve of which I telle
 Beside a toun) men clepe BaldesweH 620
 Tukked he was as ys a frere aboute
 And euer he rode þe hyndrest of þe route
 A sompnour was þere with vs in þat place
 That hade a feire rede cherubyns face 624
 ffuH saussleem he was with yen) narow
 As hote he was and licherous as a sparow
 With skalled browes blake and pyled berde
 Of his visage children) were a-ferde 628
 There was neyther lytarge quiksiluer ne bremstone
 Borage ceruce ne oyle of tartre none
 Ne oynement þat wolde clense and byte
 That hym might help of his whelkes white 632
 Ne of þe knobbes sutyng¹ in his chekes [¹ or 'sittyng']
 Wele loued he garlyk oynons and lekes
 And for to drynke stronge wyne as rede as blode
 Than wold he speke and crye as he were wode 636
 And whan þat he wele dronken hade the wyne

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Than wold he speke no worde but latyn
 A fewe termes hade he ij· or iiij·
 That he hade lerned out of som decre 640
 No wonder ys he herde yt aȝ the day
 And eke he knowe wele how þat a Iay
 Kan clepe wat as wele as kan þe pope
 But who so koude in other thinges hym grope [leaf 9] 644
 Than hade he spent aȝ his felosophie
 Ay questio quid Iuris wold he crye
 He was a gentiȝ harlot and a kynde
 A better felaw shold men nowhere fynde 648
 He wold suffre for a quart of wyne
 A gode felaw to haue his concubyne
 A twelmonth and excuse hym atte fuȝ
 ffuȝ priuely eke a fynche koude he pulle 652
 And yf he fonde owhere a gode felawe
 He wold tech hym to haue none awe
 In swich cas of þe Archedekenes curs
 But yf a mans soule heng in his purs 656
 ffor his purs he shold pyned be
 purs is the Erchedekenes heȝt quod he
 But wele I wote he lyeth right in dede
 Of cursyng ought euery gilty man to drede 660
 ffor curs wiȝ slee right as assoylyng saueth
 And also ware hym of a significaueth
 In daungere hade he at his owen gyse
 Aȝ the yong gerles of the diocyse 664
 And knewe her counseilȝ and was aȝ her rede
 A gerlonde he hade set vp-on his hede
 As grete as yt were for an ale stake
 A bokeler hade he made hym of a cake 668

Wyȝ hym there rode a gentyȝ pardonere
 Of rounceyvale his felawe and his compere
 That streight was come fro the court of Rome
 ffuȝ loude he song come hyder loue come 672
 This sumpnour bare to hym a styf burdon

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Was neuer trompe of half so grete a sound
 This pardonere hade here as yelow as any wex
 But smoth hang it as doth a stryke of flex 676
 By ounces hyng his lokkes that he hade
 And therewith his sholdres it ouersprade
 But thynne yt lay by culpons one and one
 And hode for iolyte wered he none 680
 ffor it was trussed vp in his walet
 hym thought he rode all of þe newe get
 Dyscheuele saue his cape he rode all bare
 With glaryng yen as hath an hare [leaf 9, back] 684
 A vernicle hade he sewed on his cappe
 Hys walet ley byform hym in his lappe
 ffret full of pardon come fro Rome all hote
 A voys he hade as small as hath a gote 688
 No berde hade he ne neuer shold haue
 Als smoth yt was as yt were newe shaue
 I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare
 But of his craft fro Berewyk vn-to Ware 692
 Ne was there soch a-nother pardonere
 ffor in his male he hade a pelough bere
 Which that he seid was our lady veiþ
 He seid he hade a gobet of the sailþ 696
 That seint Petir hade when he went
 Vp-on þe see tyþ Ihesu crist hym hent
 he hade a croos of laton full of stones
 And in a glas he hade pyggesbones 700
 But which thise reliktes whan þat he fonde
 A poure person dwellyng vp-on londe
 Vp-on a day he gate hym more money
 Than þe person gate in monethes twey 704
 And thus with his feyned flaterye and lapes
 He made þe person and the peple his Apes
 But trewely to telle at the last
 He was in chirche a noble eccliaist 708
 Wele koude he rede a lesson or a story

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

But altherbest he song an affertory
 ffor wele he wist whan þat song was song
 He most preche and wele afile his tong 712
 To wyn siluer as he wele koude
 Therfore he song so mery and so loude
 Now how I tolde you sothely in a clause
 The state the array the nombre and the cause
 Why þat assembled was this company 717
 In Suthwerk at this gentiſh Ostry
 That hight þe Tabard fast by the belle
 But now yt ys tyme to yow for to telle 720
 How þat we bare vs þat ilk nyght
 When we were in þe ostry alight
 And after wiſt I telle of our viage
 And aſt the remenaunt of our pilgrymage [leaf 10] 724
 But first I pray yow of your' curtesy
 That ye ne arrete nat my velany
 Though þat I plainly speke in this matere
 To telle you her wordes and her chere 728
 Ne though I speke her wordes proprely
 ffor this ye knowe as wele as I
 Who-so ſhaſt telle a tale after a man
 he most reherce as nygh as euer he can 732
 Euery word yf yt be in his charge
 Speke he neuer so rewdely ne so large
 Or elles he mote telle his tale vntrewe
 Or feyn thing or fynde wordes newe 736
 He may nought spare aſt-thogh yt were his brother
 He mote as wele sey o' worde as an other
 Crist spake hym ſelf fuſt brode in holy wryt
 And wele ye wote no velany ys yt 740
 Eke plato ſeiſt who-so can hym rede
 The wordes most be coſyn to the dede
 Also I pray you to forgeve it me
 Thogh I haue nat ſet folk in her degre 744
 Here in this tale as that they ſhold ſtond
 [This page, Egerton 2726.]

My wit is short ye may wele vndrestond
 Grete chere made our host vs euerychone
 And to soper set we vs anone 748
 He serued vs with vitailles at þe best
 Strong was the wyne and wele drynke vs lest
 A semely man our host was with-aȝ
 ffor to ben a Marchaȝ in an haȝ 752
 A large man he was with yen stepe
 A feirer burgeys was there nought in chepe
 Bold of his speche and wyse and wele taght
 And of manhode lakked hym right naght 756
 Eke he was therto a mery man
 And after soper pley he began
 And spak of mirthe / a-mong other thynges [Eg. 2726 ends]
 Whan þat he had mad / oure rekenynges [Dd. 4. 24 begins,
leaf 12] 760
 And seide / lo lordyngges trewely
 3e ben to me / right welcome hertily
 ffor be my treuthe / if that I shal nat lye
 I sey nat þis 3ere / so merie a companye 764
 At ones / in this herberwe / as is nowe
 ffayn wold I do 3ow myrthe / & I wist howe
 And of a mirthe / I am ryght now be-pouȝt
 To don 3ow ease / and it shal cost nouȝt 768
 ¶ 3e gon to Caunterbury / god 3ow spede
 That blisful martir / quyte 3ow 3oure mede
 And wel I wot / as 3e gon by the weye
 3e shapen 3ow to talken / and to pleye 772
 ffor trewely / comfort ne mirthe is non
 To ride by the weye / as dom as it were a ston
 And þerfore wyl I / maken 3ow disport
 As I seide erst / and do 3ow sem comfort 776
 And if 3ow like / alle be one assent
 To stonden / at my Iuggement
 And for to werken / as I shal 3ow sey
 To-morwe / whan 3e riden by the wey 780
 Now be my faders soule / þat is dede

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

But ȝe be merie / I wyl ȝeue ȝow myn hede
 holde vp ȝoure hondes / *with*-oute more speche
 Oure counseil was nouȝt / longe for to seche 784
 Vs þouȝt it was nat worthy / to make it nyce
 And graunted him / *with*-oute more a-vyse
 And bad him sey / his verdyt as him lest 787
 ¶ lordyngges quod he / now herkeneth for the best
 But take it nouȝt / I prey ȝow in disdeyn
 This is þe poynt / to speke it short & pleyne
 That eche of ȝow / to short with ȝoure weye
 In this viage / shall telle tales tweye 792
 To Caunterburyward / I mene it so
 And homward / he shal telle othere two
 Of auentures / that whilom / han byfalle
 And which of ȝow / bereth him best of alle 796
 That is to seyn / that telleth in þis cas
 Tales / of most sentence and solas
 Shal haue a soper / at our alder cost
 Here in this place / sittynge by this post [leaf 12, back] 800
 whan þat we comen a-geyn / fro Caunterbury
 And for to make ȝow / the more mery
 I wyl my self goodly / with ȝow ryde
 Right at myn owen cost / and be ȝouré guyde 804
 And who so wyl / my Iuggement with-sey
 shal paie al that we spende / by the wey
 And if ȝe wouchesaue / þat it be so
 Telle me a-non / *with*-oute wordes mo 808
 And I wyl erly / shape me therfore
 This þing was graunted / and oure othes swore
with ful glad hert / and prayed him also
 That he wolde wouchesaue / so to do 812
 And that he wolde be / oure gouernour
 And of our tales / Iugge and reportour
 And sette a soper / at a certein prise
 And we wyl reuled be / at his deuyse 816
 In heygh & lowe / and thus by one assent

we be acorded / to his Iuggement /
 And ther-vp-on / the wyn was fet anoñ
 we dronkyn & to rest / wenten ichoñ 820
 with-outen eny lengere / tariyng
 ¶ A morwe / whan þe day gan spryng
 Vp ros oure Ost / and was oure aller Cok
 And gadered vs to gedir / on a flok 824
 And forth we redyn / a litel pas
 vn-to the wateryng / of seynt Thomas
 And there oure Ost / bygan his hors arest
 And seide lordes / herkeneth if 3ow list 828
 3e wete oure forward / if 3e it record
 If euesong / and morwesong accord
 late se now / who shall telle þe first tale
 As euere mote I drynke / wyn or ale 832
 who so be rebel / to my Iuggement
 Shal paie for al þat is / by the weye I-spent
 Now draweth cutte / er we ferthere twynne
 ffor he þat hath the shortest / shal begynne 836
 ¶ Sire Knyght quod he / my maister & my lord
 Now draweth Cutte / for this is myn accord
 Cometh nere quod he / my lady Prioressse
 And 3e sire clerk / late be 3oure shamefastnesse 840
 Ne studieth nought / ley hand to euery mañ [leaf 13]
 A-non to drawe / euery wyght bygan
 And shortly to telle / as it was
 were it by auenture / or sort / or cas 844
 The soth is this / the kut fel on the knyght
 Of which ful glad / was euery wyght
 And telle he must his tale / as it was resoñ
 By forward / and by composicion 848
 As 3e han herd / what nedeth wordes mo
 And whan þis good man / saugh þat it was so
 As he þat wys was / and obedient
 To kepe his forward / by his free assent 852
 And seide / sithe / I shal begynne þe game

welcome be the cutte / in goddes name
Now late vs ride / and herkeneth what I sey
And *with* þat word / we redyn forth oure wey 856
And he bygan / *with* right a mery chere
This tale a-non / and seide on þis manere

¶ Heere bigynneth the knyghtes tale

[Lines 920-1170, 1582-1931, 2927-3016 from Egerton 2726.]

¶ *Iamque domos patrias scithice post aspera gentis /
prelia laurigero &c.*

Whilom there was / as olde stories tellen vs,
 A Duke / a worthy man that hight Theseus
 Of Athenes / he was lord and gouernour 861
 And in his tyme / swiche a conquerour
 That grettere was ther non / vnder the sonne
 ful many a riche contre / had he wonne 864
 what with his wysdom / and Chyualrie
 He conquered al the regne / of femenye
 That whilom cleped was / Scithia
 And wedded the fressh quene / ypolita 868
 And brougt hire hom with him / to his contre
 with meche glorie / and grete solempnyte
 And eke hire 3onge suster / Emelye
 And thus with blisse / & with victorie 872
 Lete I this noble Duke / to Athenes ride
 And al his Ost / in armes / by his side
 And certes if it ne were / to longe to here
 I wold haue told fully / the manere 876
 How wonne was the regne / of ffemonye
 By Theseus / and by his cheualrie [leaf 13, back]
 And of the grete bataille / for the nones
 Bytwene the Athenes / and Amasones 880
 And how assegid was / Ipolita
 The fair hardy Quene / of Scithia
 And of the fest pat was / at hire weddyng
 And of the temple / at hire hom commyng 884
 But al this thyng / I mot as now forbere
 I haue god wote / a large felde to ere
 And weyke be the Oxen / in my plow
 The remenaunt of my tale / is long I-now 888
 I wil nouzt letten eke / non of pis route

Lete euery felawe / tellen his tale a-boute
 And lat se now / who shal the soper wynne
 And there as I left / I wyl a-zein begynne 892
 This Duke / of which I made mencion
 whan he was come / almost to the toun
 In al his wele / and in his most pride
 He was ware / and cast his eye a-side 896
 where that there kneled / in the heye weye
 A compagne of ladies / tweye and tweye
 Eche after other / clothed in clothes blake
 But swich a cry / and swich a woo they make 900
 That in pis world / is no creature leuyng
 That euere herd swich a-noþer / weymentyng
 And of this cry / they wold neuere stynt /
 Til they the Reyne / of his bridel hent / 904
 what folk be 3e / that at myn hom comyng
 Perturbeth so my folk / with cryng
 Quod Theseus / haue 3e so gret enuye
 Of myn honour / þat 3e þus compleyne and crye 908
 Or who hath 3ow mysboden / or offended
 Do / telle me / if þat it may be amended
 And why 3e be thus clothed al in blak
 The eldest lady of hem alle / þanne spak 912
 whan she had swowned / with a dedly chere
 That it was reuthe / for to sene and here
 And seide lord / to whom fortune / hath I-3euen
 Victorie / and as a conquerour to leuen 916
 Nouȝt greueth vs 3oure glorie / ne Honour
 But we be-seke 3ow / of mercy and socour
 Haue mercy on oure woo / and oure distresse
 Some drope of pyte þurgh þy gentillesse
 Vp-on vs wrecched wommen lete þou falle
 ffor certes lord þere is none of vs aȝ
 That we haue be a duchesse or a quene
 Now be we caytyfs as it is wele sene 924
 Thanked be fortune and hir fals whele

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

[Dd. ends; leaves
14-16 gone]

[Eg. 2726 begins,
leaf 12]

[leaf 12, back]

That none astate assureth to be wele
 And certes lord to abide your presence
 Here in this temple of goddes clemence 928
 We haue be wayting aȝ þis fourtenyght
 Now helpe vs lord setth it is in thy might
 I wrecch which þat wepe and wayȝ þus
 Whilom was wyf to kyng Capaneus 932
 That starȝ at Thebes cursed be the day
 And aȝ we þat ben in this array
 And make aȝ this lamentacion
 We lost aȝ our housbondes at þat toun 936
 While þat þe sege there aboute lay
 And yit now the olde creon weleaway
 That lord is now of Thebes þe Citee
 ffulfilled of ire and iniquitee 940
 he for despyte and tyrannye
 To done the dede bodyes velanye
 Of aȝ our lordes which þat ben slawe
 He hatȝ aȝ bodies on an hepe drawe 944
 And wiȝ nat suffre by none assent
 Neyther to be buried ne ybrent
 But make houndes ete hem in despite
 And wiȝ þat worde wiȝhout more respite 948
 They feȝ grovelyng and cried pitously
 haue on vs wrecched wommen som mercy
 And lete our sorow synk in thyne hert
 This gentyȝ duk from his corsour stert 952
 Wiȝ hert pitous whan he herde hem speke
 hym thought þat his hert wold breke
 When he saw hem so pitous and so mate
 That somtyme were of so grete astate 956
 And in his armes he hem aȝ hent
 And hem comforted in full gode entent
 And swore his oȝ as he was trewe knight
 he wold done so ferforth his might 960
 Vp-on this Tiraunt Creon hem to wreke

[leaf 13]

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

That all þe peple of grece there-of shold speke
 how Creon was of Thebes serued
 As he þat hade full wele his deth deserved 964
 And right anone with-out more abode
 His baner he desplayeth and forth rode
 To Thebes ward and all his ost beside
 Ne nere Athenes wold he go ne ride 968
 Ne take his ese fully half a day
 But onward on his way that nyght he lay
 And sent anone to ypolita þe quene
 And Emely hir yonge suster shene 972
 Vn-to Athenes þere for to dwell
 And forthe he rode there is no more to telle
The rede statute of Mars with spere and targe
 So shineth in his white baner large 976
 That all the feldes gliteren vp and doun
 And by his baner born was his penoun
 Of gold full riche in which there was ybete
 The manatour which þat he wan in Crete 980
 Thus rideth this duk this noble conquerour
 And in his ost of chivalrye þe flour
 Til þat he came to Thebes and alight
 ffeir in a felde there as he thought to fight 984
 But shortly for to speke of this thing
 With Creon which was of Thebes kyng
 He faught and slewe him manly as a knight
 In plein bateil and put his folk to flight 988
 And by assent he wan þe Cite after
 And rent adoun spar wall and rafter
 And to the ladies he restored hath ageyn
 The bones of her housbondes þat were sleyn 992
 To do obsequies as was tho the gyse
 But it were all to long for to deuise
 The grete clamour and þe grete weymentyng
 That the ladies made at the brennyng 996
 Of the bodies and the grete honour

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

That Theseus this noble conquerour
 doth to thise ladies when they fro him went
 But shortly to telle is myn^d entent 1000
 Whan þat pis worthy duk this Theseus [leaf 13, back]
 hath Creon sleine and wonne Thebes thus
 Stille in þat felde he toke aȝ night his rest
 And did with all þe contre as hym lest 1004
 To ransake in the taas of þe bodyes dede
 Hym for to strype of harneys and of wede
 The pilours didden her besynesse and cure
 After the bataiȝ and the discomfiture 1008
 And so befiȝ þat in the taas they founde
 Thurgh gurt with many a greuou wounde
 Two yong knightes liggyng by and by
 Both in one armes wroght fuȝ richely 1012
 Of which two Arcita was þat one
 And þat other knight hight Palamone
 Noght fully quyk ne fully dede they were
 But by her cotearmes and by her gere 1016
 The heraudes knew hem best of aȝ
 As they that weren of þe blode riaȝ
 Of Thebes and of two susters born
 Out of the taas the pilours haue hem born 1020
 And han hem caried soft vn-to the tent
 Of theseus and fuȝ sone he hem hent
 And sent to Athenes to dwell in prison
 perpetuelly with-uten^d raunson^d 1024
 And whan this worthy duk hath þus done
 He toke his ost and home he ryt anone
 with laurieȝ crowned as a conquerour
 And there he leved in ioy and honour 1028
 Terme of his lyf what nedeth wordes mo
 And in a tourne of angwyssȝ and of wo
 Dwellen thise palamon and his felawe arcite
 ffor euermore there may no gold hem quite 1032
 This passeth yere by yere and day by day
 [This page, Egerton 2726.]

TiH it befeth ones in a morow of May
 That Emely that feirer was to sene
 Then is the lilly vp-on þe stalk so grene 1036
 And fressher þan þe May with floures new
 ffor with þe rose stroue hir hewe
 I note which was þe feirer of hem two
 Er it were day as was hir wont to do 1040
 She was aresen) and aH redy dight [leaf 14]
 ffor May wott haue no slogardrye a night
 That seson) prykketh euery gentel hert
 And maketh hym out of his slepe to stert 1044
 And seith arise and do thine obseruance
 This meyde Emelye to haue remembrance
 To don) honour to May and for to ryse
 Clothed was she fressh for to deuyse 1048
 Her yelow heres browded were in o tresse
 Behinde hir bak a yerde longe as I gesse
 And to the gardyn) at the sonne vprest
 She walketh vp and doun) and as hir lest 1052
 She gadred floures party white and rede
 To make a soteH garlond for hir hede
 And as an AngeH hevenlich she songe
 The toure þat was so thik and so stronge 1056
 Which of þe casteH was þe chief dongeon)
 There as thise knightes were in prison)
 Of which I told you and telle shaft
 Was even) ioynyng to þe gardyn) wait 1060
 There as this Emely hade hir pleyng
 Bright was the son) and clere þe mornyn)
 And palamon) þis wofull prisoner
 As was his wone by leve of his gayler 1064
 Was risen) and romed in the chambre on) high
 In the which he aH the noble Citee sigh
 And eke þe gardyn) full of braunches grene
 There as this fressh Emelye the shene 1068
 And was hir walke and romed vp and doun)

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

This wofull prisoner þis palamon
 Goth in the chambre to and fro
 And to him self compleynyng of his wo 1072
 That he was born full oft cried he allas
 And so befitt þat by auenture or cas
 That thurgh þe wyndowe thik of many a barre
 Of Iren grete and square as ony sparre 1076
 He cast his yee vp-on Emelya
 And there-with-añ he blent and cried A
 As thogh he stongen were vn-to the hert
 And with þat crie Arcite anone vp stert 1080
 And seide Cosyn myn what eyleth the [leaf 14, back]
 That art so pale and dedely for to see
 Why cridest thou who hath the don offence
 ffor goddes sake take it in pacience 1084
 Our prison for it may none other be
 ffortune hath yeve vs this aduersite
 Som wikked aspect or disposicioun
 Of Saturne by som constillacioun 1088
 hath yeve vs this althogh we hade sworn
 So stode the heven whan that we were born
 We most endure this is the short and plein
 This palamon answerd and seide agein 1092
 Cosyn forsoth of þis opinion
 Thow hast a veyn ymaginacon
 This prison caused me not for to cryee
 But I was hurt right now purgh myn yee 1096
 In-to myn hert þat yt wiñ my bane be
 The feirenes of þat lady that I se
 Yonder in the gardyn romyng to and fro
 Is cause of añ my crying and my wo 1100
 I ne wote whether she be a womman or a goddes
 But Venus I trow it be as I gesse
 And there-with-añ on knees he fitt
 And seid Venus yf it be thy wiñ 1104
 Now in þis gardyn thus þe to transfigure
 [This page, Egerton 2726.]

Byfore me sorowfuH wrecched creature
 Out of this prison helpe þat we may skape
 And yf so be our desteny be shape 1108
 By eterne worde to dey in prison
 Of our linage haue som compassion
 That is so lowe brought by tyrannye
 And *with* that worde Arcite gan aspie 1112
 Where as this lady romed to and fro
 And *with* þat sight hir beaute hurt him so
 That yf þat palamon was wounded sore
 Arcite is hurt as moch or more 1116
 And *with* þat sight he seide pitously
 Thy fressh beaute sleth me sodeinly
 Of hir þat rometh þere in yondre place
 And but yf I haue hir mercy and hir grace 1120
 That I may seyn hir at the lest wey [leaf 15]
 I am but dede there is no more to sey
 This palamon whan he thise wordes herd
 Dispitously he loked and answerd 1124
 Whether seist thou this in earnest or in play
 Nay *quod* Arcite in earnest by my fay
 God helpe me so me lust yueH to play
 This palamon gan to knytte his browes tway 1128
 Yt were to the *quod* he no grete honour
 ffor to be fals and for to be a traytour
 To me that am þy Cosyn and þy brother
 Isworn fuH depe and ecch of vs to other 1132
 That neuer for to dey in peyne
 TiH þat the detH depart shaH vs tweyne
 Neyther of vs in loue to hynder other
 Ne in none other caas my leve brother 1136
 But that þou sholdest trewly forther me
 In euery caas as I shaH forther the
 This was thine othe and myn certeyn
 I wote right wele þou darst it nat *with*seyn 1140
 Thus art þou of my counseiH out of dout

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

D

And now þou woldest falsly bene about
 To loue my lady whom I loue and serue
 And euere shaft tyh þat my hert sterue 1144
 Nay certes fals Arcite thow shalt nat so
 I loued hir first and told the my wo
 As to my counseilh and to my brother sworn
 To forther me as I haue told byform 1148
 ffor which þou art bounde as a knight
 To help me yf it lay in thy myght
 Or elles art þou fals I dare wele seyn
 This Arcite proudely spake ageyn 1152
 Thow shalt quod he be rather fals þan I
 And þou art fals I telle the witterly
 ffor parauenture I loued hir first or thow
 What wiht þou sey þou wost it now 1156
 Whether she be a womman or a goddesse
 Thyn is the affecon of holynesse
 And myn is love as to a creature
 ffor which I telle the myn auenture 1160
 As to my Cosyn and my brother swore [leaf 15, back]
 I purpose þat þou lovedest hir byfore
 Wost þou nat wele þat olde clerkes sawe
 That who shaft yeve lovers ony lawe 1164
 Love is a gretter lawe by my þan
 Than be yeven may to ony erthly man
 And therefore posityf lawe and swich decre
 Is broken aht day for love in ecch degre 1168
 A man most love nedys maugre in his hede
 He may noht fle yt though he shold be dede [Eg. 2726 ends]
 Al be she / Mayde / wydewe / or ellis wyff / [Dd. begins, leaf 17]
 And eke it is nouzt likly / al thy lif / 1172
 To stonde in hire grace / no more shal I
 ffor wel þou wost / thy seluen verayly
 That þou and I / be dampned to prison
 Perpetuelly / vs geyneth no raunson 1176
 We striue / as dide þe houndes / for þe bon

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

That faught al day / and yet here part was non
 There cam a kyte / whyle þei were so wrothe
 And bar a-wey þe bon / bytween hem bothe 1180
 And þerfore / at þe kynges court / my brother
 Eche for him self / there is non other
 ¶ I loue if þou list / for I loue and ay shal
 And sothly leue brother / this is al 1184
 Here in prison / mote we endure
 And ech of vs / take his aventure
 ¶ ♀ Gret was þe strif / and longe bytween hem twey
 If þat I had leyser / for to sey 1188
 But to the effect / it happed on a day
 To telle it ȝow / as shortly as I may
 A worthy Duke / that hight Parotheus
 That felawe was / to þis Duke thesenaus 1192
 Syn thilk day / þat þei were children lyte
 was come to Athenes / his felawe to visite
 ffor to pley / as he was wont to do
 ffor in the world / he loued no man so 1196
 And he loued him / as tenderly a-geyn
 So wele they loued / as olde bokes seyn
 That whanne þat on was ded / soth to telle
 his felawe went / & sought him down in helle 1200
 But of that story / list ne nat to wryte
 Duke Parotheus / loued wel Arcite
 And had him knowe / at Thebes ȝere by ȝere
 And finally at the request / and prayere 1204
 Of Parotheus / with-oute ony raunsom
 Duke Theseus / lete him ouȝt of prison
 ffreely to go / where as him list ouer alle
 In swich a gyse / as I ȝow telle shalle 1208
 This was the forward / pleyntly to endite
 By-twene Theseus / and this Arcite
 That if so were / þat Arcite were founde
 Euere in his lyue / by day or nyght o stounde [leaf 17, back]
 In ony contre / of this Theseus 1213

And he were caught / it was a-corded thus
 That with a sword / he shulde lese hise hede
 There was non *oper* remedy / ne rede 1216
 But taketh his leue / and homward he him spedde
 Lat him be ware / his nekke lith to wedde
 So gret a sorwe / suffreth now Arcite
 The deth he feleth / purugh his hert smyte 1220
 he wepeth and wayleth / he crieth pytously
 To sle him self / he wayteth preuily
 He seide alas / the day þat he was born
 Now is my prison wers / than biforn 1224
 Now is me shape / eternely to dwelle
 Nought in purgatorie / but in helle
 Allas þat euere I knew / Parotheus
 ffor elles had I dwelled / with Duke Theseus 1228
 ffetered in his prison / for euere mo
 Than had I ben in blisse / & nouzt in woo
 Only the sight of hire / whom þat I serue
 Though þat I neuere / hire grace may deserue 1232
 wold haue suffised / right I-now to me
 O. dere Cosyn / Palamon / quod he
 Thyn is the victorie / of this auenture
 fful blisfully in prison / maist þou endure 1236
 In prison / nay certes / but in Paradys
 wel hath fortune / turned the the dys
 Thou hast the sight / of hire / & I the absence
 ffor possible it is / sith þou hast hire presence 1240
 And art a knyght / a worthy & an able
 That be som cas / sithe fortune is chaungeable
 Thow maist to thy desyre / som tyme atteyne
 But I þat am exiled / and barayne 1244
 Of alle grace / and in so gret dispeyre
 That there nys no water / ffyr / ne Eyre
 Ne creature / that of hem makid is
 That may me hele / or do comfort in this 1248
 wel ought I sterue / in wanhope & distresse

ffare wel my lyf / my lust / and my gladnesse
 ¶ 𐀀 Allas why pleyne so folk / in comune
 Of purueance of god / or of fortune 1252
 That ȝeueþ hem ful oft / in many gyse [leaf 18]
 wel beter / þanne þei can / hem self deuyse
 Somme men desire / for to haue richesse
 That cause is of here mordre / or gret seknes 1256
 And somme man wold / out of prison fayn
 That in his hous / is of his meyne slayn
 Infernyt harmes / ben in this matere
 we wot neuere / what we preisen here 1260
 we faren as he / þat dronken is as a mous
 A dronke man wot wel / he hath an hous
 But he ne wot which is / þe right weye theder
 And to a dronke man / the weye is slyder 1264
 And certes in þis world / so fare we
 we seke fast after / felicite
 But we gon wrong / ful ofte trewely
 Thus may we seyn alle / and namely I 1268
 That wende / and had / a gret opinyon
 That if I myght escape / from prison
 Than had I ben / in ioye & parfyt hele
 That now am exiled / fro my wele 1272
 Syn I may nouȝt se ȝow / Emelye
 I am but ded / þere is non oper remedye
 ¶ 𐀀 Vp-on þat oper side / Palamon
 whan þat he wist / þat Arcite was gon 1276
 Swich sorwe he maketh / þat the grete Tour
 Resounded of his Ianglyng / and clamour
 The pure feteres / on his shynes grete
 were of his bittere / salt teres / wete 1280
 Allas quod he / Arcite Cosyn myn
 Of al oure strif / god wot þe fruyt is thyn
 Thow walkest now / in Thebes at thy large
 And of my woo / þou ȝeuest litel charge 1284
 Thow maist / sithe þou hast / wysdom & manhode

Assemble alle the folk / of oure kynrede
 And make a werre so sharp / on this Citee
 That be som auenture / or trettee 1288
 Thow maist haue hire / to lady & to wyf
 ffor whom I must nedes / lese my lyf
 ffor as be weye / of possibilitee
 sithe þou art at þe large / of prison free 1292
 And art a lord / gret is þin auantage
 More þan myn / þat sterueth here in a cage [leaf 18, back]
 ffor I mote wepe / and wayle while I leue
 with al the woo / þat prison may me ȝeue 1296
 And eke with peyne / that loue me ȝeueþ also
 That doubleth al my *turment* / and my woo
 ¶ Ther-with / the fyr of ielousie vp stirte
 with-Inne his brest / & hent him by the herte 1300
 So wodly / þat he lyke was / to be-hold
 To Box tree / or to asshen / dede and cold
 ¶ Thanne seide he / O cruel goddes þat gouerne
 This world with byndyng / of ȝoure word eterne 1304
 And wryte in the table / of Athamante
 ȝoure parlament / and ȝoure eterne graunte
 what is man-kynde more / vn-to ȝow hold
 Than is a shepe / that rukketh in the fold 1308
 ffor slayn is man / right as an other best
 And dwelleth eke / in prison / and arrest
 And hath seknes / and gret aduersitee
 And often tymes / giltles parde 1312
 what gouernance is / in this prescience
 That giltles / *turmentist* Innocence
 And ȝet encreseth this / al my penaunce
 That man is bounde / to his obseruance 1316
 ffor goddes sake / to letten of his wyll
 There as a best may / al his lust fulfille
 And when a best is ded / he hath no peyne
 But after his deth / a man mote wepe & pleyne 1320
 Though in þis world / he haue care and woo

with-oute doute / it may stonde so
The answer of þis / lete I to deuynes
But wel I wot / in þis world gret peyne is 1324
 ¶ 𐀚 *Allas / I se a serpent or a thef*
That many a trewe man / hath do myschef
Gon at his large / & where him list may turne
But I mot be in prison / thurugh saturne 1328
And eke þurugh Iuno Ielous / and eke wode
That hath wel ny destroyed / al the blode
Of Thebes / with his wast walles wyde
And Venus sleth me / on þat other syde 1332
ffor ielousye / and feer of þis Arcite
Now wyl I stynt / of Palamoñ a lyte
And lete him in this prison stille dwelle (leaf 19)
And of Arcite / forth I wyl ȝow telle 1336
 ¶ 𐀚 *The somer passeth / & the nyghtes longe*
Encresynge double wyse / the peynes stronge
Bothe of the louere / and of the prisoner
I ne wot which hath / the sorwefullest myster 1340
ffor shortly to seyn / this Palamoñ
Perpetuelly / is dampned to prison
In cheynes and in feteres / to be ded
And Arcite is exiled / vp-on his hed 1344
ffor euere more / ouȝt of þat contre
Ne neuere more / he shal his lady se
Now louyers I ask ȝow / this questioñ
Who hath the werse / Arcite or Palamoñ 1348
That on may se his lady / day by day
But in prison / mote he dwellen ay
That other where him list / may ride or go
But sen his lady / shal he neuere mo 1352
Now demeth as ȝow list / ȝe þat can
ffor I wyl telle ȝow forth / as I began

[Part II. No gap in the MS.]

¶ 𐀀 Whan þat Arcite / to Thebes come was
 fful ofte a day / he swelte & seide allas 1356
 ffor sen my lady / shal I neuere mo
 And shortly to concluden / al his woo
 So meche sorwe / had neuere creature
 That is or shal / while þe world may dure 1360
 his slepe his mete & drynk / is him byraft
 That lene he wex & drye / as is a shaft
 His eyen holwe / and grysely to be-holde
 his hewe falwe / and pale / as asshen colde 1364
 And solitarie he was / and euere allone
 And walkyng al þe nyght / makyng his mone
 And if he herd song / or Instrument
 Than wold he wepe / he myght nat stynt 1368
 So feble eke were hise spirites / and so lowe
 And chaunged so / þat noman koude him knowe
 His speche ne his vois / though men yt herde
 And in his gere / for al the world he ferde 1372
 Nouȝt only lyke / the louters maladye
 Of hereos / but rather lyke Manye ¶ mania
 Engendred / of humour / malicolyk [leaf 19, back]
 Byforn his owen / Celle fantasyk 1376
 And shortly turned / was al vp so doun
 Bothe habit / and eke disposicioun
 Of hym / this wooful louter Arcite
 what shuld I al day / of hys woo endite 1380
 whan he endured had / a ȝere or two
 Thys cruel turment / & thys peyne & woo
 At Thebes in his contre / as I seyde
 Vp-on a nyght in slepe / as he him leyde 1384
 him pouȝt how þat / the wynged god Mercurie
 Byforn him stod / & bad him to be merie
 his slepy yerde / in honde he bar vp-right
 An hatte he wered / vp-on his heris bright 1388

Arrayed was þis god / as I tok kepe
 As he was / whan Argus / toke his slepe
 And seide him thus / to Athenes shalt þou wende
 There is the shapen / of thy woo an ende 1392
 ¶ And with that word / Arcite woke and stirt
 Now trewely / how sore þat me smert
 Quod he / to Athenes / right now wyl I fare
 Ne for the drede of deth / I wyl nat spare 1396
 To se my lady / whom þat I loue and serue
 In hire presence / I rekke nouȝt / though I sterue
 And with þat word / he caught a gret Myrour
 And saw / þat chaunged was al his colour 1400
 And saw his visage / al in an oþer kynde
 And right a-non / it ran him in his mynde
 That sithe his face / was so disfigured
 Of maladye / that he had endured 1404
 He myght wele ȝeue / that he bare hym lowe
 Lyue in Athenes / euere more vnknowe
 And sen his lady / wel ny day by day
 And right a-non / he chaunged his array 1408
 And clad him / as a pore laborere
 And al a-lone / saue oonly a squyere
 That knew his preuyte / and al his cas
 which was disgysed / porely as he was 1412
 To a Athenes is he gon / the next wey
 And to the court / he com on a dey
 And at the gate / he profred his seruyse
 To drugge and drawe / what men wold deuyse [r. 20] 1416
 And shortly of this matere / for to seyn
 He fel in office / with a Chaumberleyn
 The which þat dwellyng was / with Emelye
 ffor he was wys / and coude sone espie 1420
 Of euery seruauant / which þat serueth hire
 wel coude he hewe / wode / and water bere
 ffor he was ȝong & myghty / for þe nones
 And ther-to he was long / and bygge of bones 1424

To don þat ony wyght / can him deuysen
 A ȝere or two / he was in this seruyse
 Page of the chaumbre / of Emelye the bryght
 And Philostrate he seide / that he hight 1428
 But half so wel byloued a man / as he
 Ne was þere neuere in courte / of his degre
 he was so gentil / of condicioun
 That þorugh-ouȝt al þe court / was his renoun 1432
 They seiden þat it were / a charite
 That Theseus wold / enhaunce his degre
 And putten him / in worshipful seruyse
 There as he myght / his vertue exercise 1436
 And thus with-Inne a while / his name is spronge
 Both of his dedes / and his goode tonge
 That Theseus hath taken him / so nere
 That of his chaumbre / he mad him a squyere 1440
 And ȝaf him gold / to meyntene his degree
 And eke men brouȝt him / ouȝt of his contre
 ffrom ȝere to ȝere / ful preuily his rent
 But honestly & slily / he it spent 1444
 That no man wondrede / how þat he it hadde
 And thre ȝere in this wyse / his lyf he ladde
 And bar him so in pees / and eke in werre
 There was no man / þat Theseus hath derre 1448
 ¶ And in this blisse / lete I now Arcite
 And speke I wyl of Palamon / a lyte
 In derknesse and orrible / and strong prison
 This seuene ȝer / hath seten Palamon 1452
 ffor-pyned / what for woo / and for distresse
 who feleth double soor / and heuynesse
 But Palamon / þat loue distreyneth so
 That wod ouȝt of his wytte / he goth for woo 1456
 And eke ther-to / he is a prisonere
 Perpetuelly / nought oonly for a ȝere
 ¶ who coude ryme / in englyssh proprely [leaf 20, back]
 hys martirdom / by god it am nat I 1460

Therefore I passe / as lightly as I may
 It fel / that in the / vij / 3ere / in May
 The thridde nyght / as olde bokes seyn
 That al this storie / tellen more pleyne 1464
 were it by auenture / or destyne
 As whan a þing is shapen / it shal be ¶ *verum est*
 That sone after the mydnyght / Palamoñ
 Be helpyng of a frende / brake his prisoñ 1468
 And fleeth the Citee / as fast as he may go
 ffor he had 3eue / his Iayler drynke so
 Of Clarry / mad of a certeyn wyne 1471
 with Nerkotikes and opye / of Thebes fyne ¶ *Opium*
 That al þat nyght / þough þat men wold him shake The-
 The Iayler slep so / he myght nouȝt wake banum
 ¶ And thus he fleeth / as fast as euere he may
 The nyght was short / and fast by the day 1476
 That nedes cost / he must him seluen hyde
 And to a groue / fast there besyde
 with dredful fote / than walketh Palamoñ
 ffor shortly / this was his oppinyoñ 1480
 That in þat groue / he wold him hyde al day
 And in the nyght / þan wold he take his wey
 To Thebes ward / his frendes for to pray
 On Theseus to helpen him / to werrey 1484
 And shortly / eiper he wold lese hise lyf
 On wynnen Emelye / vn-to his wyf
 This is þe effect / and his entent pleyne
 ¶ Now wyl I turne / to Arcite a-geyn 1488
 That litel wyst / how ny þat was his care
 Til þat fortune / had brought him in þe snare
 The besy larke / the messanger of day
 Saleweth in hir song / the morwe gray 1492
 And verray Phebus / riseth vp so bryght
 That al þe orient / laugheth of þe light
 And with hise stremes / drieth in the greues
 The siluer dropes / hangyng on the leues 1496

And Arcite þat is / in the court rial
 with Theseus / the squyer principal
 ys rysen and loketh / on the mery day
 And for to doñ / his obseruauunce to May 1500
 Remembryng on þe poynt / of his desyre [Dd. ends; leaves 21-25 gone]
 He on) a courser startlyng as the fire [Eg. 2726 begins, leaf 19, back]
 Is ryden in-to the felde hym to play
 Out of þe court were it a myle or twey 1504
 And to the groue of which that I you told
 By auenture his wey he gan hold
 To maken him a gerlond of þe greues
 Were it of wodebynd or hathorn) leues 1508
 And lowde he song ayein the son) shene
 May with all thy floures and þy grene
 Welcome be þow feire fressh May
 In hope that I som) grene gete may 1512
 And from his courser with a lusty hert
 In-to the grove full hastily he start
 And in a path he rometh vp and doun)
 There as by auenture this palamon) 1516
 Was in a buss) þat no man might him se
 ffor sore aferde of his deth than was he
 No thing knewe he þat it was Arcite
 God wote he wold haue trowed it full lyte [leaf 20] 1520
 But soth is seide gone seth ys many yeres
 That felde hath yen) and wode hath eres
 It is full feire a man to bere hym even)
 ffor all day meteth men at vnset steven) 1524
 full lileth wote Arcite of his felawe
 That was so ny to herken all his sawe
 ffor in this buss) he sitteth now full styлле
 Whan þat Arcite hade romed all his fyllе 1528
 And songen all the rounde) lustely
 In-to a stody he felle so sodeinly
 As done thise louers in her queint geres
 Now in the crop now in the breres 1532

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

Now vp now doun) as boket in a well
 Right as þe friday sothly for to tell
 Now yt shineth now it reyneth fast
 Right so caan gery venus ouer-cast 1536
 The hertes of hir folk right as hir day
 Is geer-fuht right so chaungeth she array
 Selde is the friday aht the woke lyke
 Whan that Arcite hade songe he gan to syke 1540
 And set him doun) with-outen ony more
 Allas quod he that day þat I was bore
 How longe Iuno thurgh thy cruelte
 Wyht þou weren Thebes the Cite 1544
 Allas ybrought is to confusion)
 The blode ryah of Cadme and amphion)
 Of Cadmus which that was the first man
 That Thebes bylde or first the toun) began 1548
 And of þe Cite first was crowned Kyng
 Of his lynage am I and his of-spring
 By verray lyne as of the stok roiaht
 And now I am so kaytyfd and so thraht 1552
 That he that is my mortaht enemy
 I serue him as his squier pourely
 And yit doth Iuno me wel more shame
 I dare nat byknow myn) owen name 1556
 But there as I was wont to hight Arcite
 Now hight I philostrate nat worth a mite
 Allas þow felt mars allas Iuno
 Thus hath your Ire aht our lynage for-do [leaf 20, back] 1560
 Saue only me and wrecched Palamon)
 That Theseus martireth in his prison)
 And ouer aht this to sle me outerly
 Loue hath his verry dart so brennyngly 1564
 Isteked thurgh my trewe carefuht hert
 That shapen was my dethe erst er my shert
 Ye sle me with your yeen Emelye
 Ye been the cause wherfore that I dye 1568

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Of aȝ þe remenaunt of myn other care
 Ne set I nat the mountance of a tare
 So that I koude do ought to your plesance
 And with that word he felle doun in a trance 1572
 A long tyme and afterward he vp sterte
 This palamon that thoght that thurgh his hert
 He felt a cold swerd sodeinly glyde
 ffor Ire he quoke no lenger wold he byde 1576
 And whan that he hade herde Arcites tale
 As he were wode with face dede and pale
 He stert hym vp out of the buskes thykke
 And seide Arcite fals traytour wykke 1580
 Now art þou hent þow louest my lady so
 ffor whom that I haue aȝ this peyn and wo
 And art my blode and to my counseil sworn
 As I ful oft haue told the here byform 1584
 And hast beiaped here duk theseus
 And falsly chaunged hast þow þy name thus
 I wolt be dede or elles þow shalt dye
 Thow shalt nat loue my lady Emelye 1588
 But I wolt loue hir onely and no mo
 ffor I am palamon thy mortall fo
 And þough þat I no wepen haue in this place
 But out of prison am stert by grace 1592
 I drede nat that other þow shalt dye
 Or þou ne shalt nat loven Emelye
 Chese which þou wolt or þou shalt nat sterte
 This Arcite with ful dispitous hert 1596
 Whan he hym knewe and hade his tale herde
 As fers as a lyon pulled out his swerde
 And seide thus by god that sitteth aboue
 Nere it that þou art seke and wode for loue [leaf 21] 1600
 And eke that thou no wepen hast in this place
 Thow shuldest neuere out of this greue pace
 That thou ne sholdest dyen of my honde
 ffor I desire the seurtee and the bonde 1604

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Which þat þou seist þat I haue made to the
 What verray fole thinke wele that loue is fre
 And I wolþ loue hir maugre aþ thy might
 But for as moçh as thou art a knight 1608
 And wilnest to darreyn hir by bataiþ
 Haue here my treuthe to-morowe I wyþ nat fayþ
 With-out wetyng of ony other wight
 That here I wolþ be founde as a knight 1612
 And bryngen harneys righ ynough for the
 And chese the best and leue the werst for me
 And mete and drynke this night wolþ I bryng
 Ynogh for the and clothes for thy beddyng 1616
 And yf so be that þow my lady wynne
 And sle me in the wode there I am Inne
 Thou maist wele haue thy lady as for me
 This palamon) answerd and seide I graunte yt the 1620
 And thus they ben departed tyþ a morowe
 Whan ech of hem hade leyde his feythe to borowe
 O cupide out of aþ charite
 O reigne þat wilt no felawe haue with the 1624
 ffuþ soþ is seide that loue ne lordship
 With nat hir thankes haue no felawship
 Wele fynden that Arcite and palamon)
 Arcite is ryden anone vn-to the toun) 1628
 And on þe morow er yt were dayes light
 ffuþ priuely ij. harneys hathe he dight
 Butþ suffisant and mete to darreyne
 The bataiþ in the feld bitwex hem tweyne 1632
 And on his hors alone as he was born)
 he carieth aþ this harneys him byform)
 And in the grove at tyme and place yset
 This Arcite and palamon) ben met 1636
 They gan to chaunge colour in her face
 Right as the hunters in the reigne of trace
 That stonden at the gap with a spere
 Whan hunted is the lyon) or the bere [leaf 21, back] 1640

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

And hereth̃ hym come russhing in the greves
 And breketh̃ both bowes and the leves
 A thinketh̃ here comth̃ my mortall̃ enemy
 withouten fayle he mote be dede or I 1644
 ffor outh̃er I mote sle hym at the gap
 Or he mot sle me yf that me myshap
 So ferden they in chaungyng of her hewe
 As fer us euerych̃ of hem other knewe 1648
 There was no gode day ne no saluyng
 But streight without worde or rehersyng
 Euerych̃ of hem helpe to armen other
 As frendely as he were his owen brother 1652
 And after that with sharpe speres strong
 They foynen ecch̃ at other wonder long
 Thow myghtest wene that this palamon
 In his fightyng were a wode lyon 1656
 And as a crueth̃ tygre was Arcite
 As wylde bores gan they smyte
 That frothen white as fome for ire wode
 Vp to the Ancles fyght they in her blode 1660
 And in this wyse I lete hem fightyng dwell
 And forthe of theseus I wiþ you tell
 The desteny ministre generall̃
 That executeth̃ in the world ouer all̃ 1664
 The purueaunce that god hath̃ seyñ byform̃
 So stronge it is that though þe world hade sworñ
 The contrary of a thing by yee and nay
 Yit somtyme yt shall fallen on a day 1668
 That falleth̃ nat est within a Mt̃ yere
 ffor certainly our appetites here
 Be it of werre or pees or hate or loue
 All̃ is this rewled by the sight aboue 1672
 This meyne I now by mighty Theseus
 That for to hunten ys so desirous
 And namely at the grete hert in May
 That in his bed þere daweth̃ hym no day 1676

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

That he nys cladde / and redy for to ride
 with hunt and horn and houndes him besyde
 ffor in his huntyng hath he soch delite
 That yt is aȝ his ioy and appetit [leaf 23] 1680
 To ben him self the grete hertes bane
 And after Mars he serueth now diane
 Clere was the day as I haue tolde or this
 And Theseus with aȝ ioy and blis 1684
 With his ypolita the feir quene
 And Emely clothed aȝ in grene
 On huntyng be they riden rialy
 And to the groue that stode full fast by 1688
 In which there was an hert as men him told
 Duk Theseus streight the wey hath hold
 And to the launde he rideth hym full right
 ffor theder was the hert wont haue his flight 1692
 And ouer a broke and so forth on his way
 This duk wold haue a cours at hym or twey
 with soch as that hym lyst comaunde
 And whan this duk was com vn-to the launde 1696
 Vnder the sonne he lokketh and anon
 He was ware of Arcite and palamon
 That foughten breame as it were bores two
 The bright swerdes wenten to and fro 1700
 So hidously that with the lest stroke
 yt semed as yt wold felle an oke
 But what they were no thing he ne wote
 This duk his courser with the spores smote 1704
 And at a stert he was bitwex hem two
 And pulled out a swerde and cried ho
 Nomore vp-on payne of lesyng of your hede
 By mighty Mars he shaft anone be dede 1708
 That smyteth ony stroke þat I may seen
 But telleth me what mister men ye been
 That ben so hardy for to fighten here
 with-uten Iuge or other offiere 1712

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

E

As it were in a listes roially
 This palamon answerd hastily
 And seide sire what nedeth wordes mo
 We han deserued the deth both two 1716
 Two wofull wrecches ben we and caytyfes
 That ben encombred of our owen lyfes
 And as pou art a rightfult lord and iuge
 Ne yeve vs nother mercy ne refuge [leaf 22, back] 1720
 But sle me first for seint charitee
 But sle my felawe eke as wele as me
 Or sle hym first for thogh pou know it lyte
 This is thy mortall fo this is Arcite 1724
 That fro thy lond is banesshed on his hede
 ffor which he hath deserued to be dede
 ffor this is he that came vn-to thy yate
 And seide that he hight philostrate 1728
 Thus hath he iaped þe fult many a yere
 And pou hast maked hym thy chief squiere
 And this is he that loueth Emely
 ffor seth the day is come that I shall dey 1732
 I make plainly my confessioun
 That I am thyk wofull palamon
 That hath thy prison broken wykkedly
 I am thy mortall fo and yit am I 1736
 That loueth so hote Emelye the bright
 That I wiþ dien presens in hir sight
 Wherefore I ax deth and my iuwyse
 But sle my felawe in the same wyse 1740
 ffor both haue we deserued to be sleyn
 This worthy duk answerd anone ayein
 And seide this is a short conclusyon
 your owen mouthe by your confessyon 1744
 Hath dampned yow and I wol it recorde
 Yt nedeth nought to pyne you with the corde
 Ye shall be dede by mighty Mars the rede
 The quene anone for verry wommanhede 1748

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Gan for to wepe and so did Emelye
 And all the ladyes in the cumpanye
 Grete pite was yt as yt thoght hem all
 That euer soch a chaunce shold fall 1752
 ffor gentell men they were of grete astate
 And no thing but for loue was this debate
 And saugh her bloody woundes wyde and sore
 And all cryden both las and more 1756
 Hauē mercy lord vpon vs¹ women all [¹ vs overline]
 And on her bare knees adoun they fall
 And wold haue kist his fete there as he stode
 Tiff at the last aslaked was his mode [leaf 28] 1760
 ffor pitee renneth sone in gentell herte
 And pough he first for Ire quoke and starte
 He hath considred shortly in a clause
 The trespas of hem both and eke the cause 1764
 And all though that his Ire her gilt accused
 yit in his reason he hem both excused
 As thus he thought wele that euery man
 wold help hym self in loue yf that he can 1768
 And deliuere hym self out of prison
 And eke his hert hade compassion
 Of wommen for they wepen euery in one
 And in his gentle hert he pought anonie [line by corrector]
 And softe vn-to hym self he seide fye 1773
 Vp-on a lord that wold haue no mercy
 But ben a lyon both in worde and dede
 To hem that ben in repentaunce and drede 1776
 As wele as to a proude dispitous man
 That wold maintene that he first bygan
 That lord hath litell of discrecion
 That in soch cas can no deuysion 1780
 But weyeth pride and humbles after one
 And shortly whan his Ire ys thus agone
 He gan to loken vp with yeen light
 And spak thise same wordes all on hight 1784

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

The god of loue a benedicite
 How mighty and how grete a lord is he
 Ayeinst his might there geyneth none obstacles
 He may be cleped a god for his miracles 1788
 ffor he kan maken at his owen gyse
 Of eueryche hert as that him lust deuyse
 Lo here this Arcite and this palamon
 That quikly were out of my preson 1792
 And might haue leved in Thebes roially
 And weten pat I am her mortall enemy
 And that her deth lieth in my might also
 And yit hath loue maugre her yen two 1796
 Brought hem hider both for to dye
 Now loketh is nat that an hie folye
 Who may ben a fole but yf he loue
 Byhold for goddes sake that sitteth aboue 1800
 See how they blede be they nat wele arrayed [leaf 23, back]
 Thus hath her lord the god of loue payed
 Her wages and her fees for her seruice
 And yit they wenen for to been full wyse 1804
 That seruen loue for ought that may fah
 But this ys yit the best game of all
 That she for whom they han this iolyte 1807
 Konne hem perfore¹ as moche thanke as me [perfore overtime]
 She wote na more of all this hote fare
 By god than wote a Cokkow or an hare
 But all mote ben assayed hote and colde
 A man mote be a fole outhur yong or olde 1812
 I wote yt by my self full yore agone
 ffor in my tyme a seruaunt was I one
 And therefore sen I know of loves peyne
 And wote how sore he kan a man destreyne 1816
 As he that hath be caught oft in his laas
 I yow foryeve all holy this trespaaas
 At request of the quene that kneleth here
 And eke of Emely my suster dere 1820

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

And ye shaſt both anone vn-to me swere
 That neuer mo ye shaſt my cuntrey dere
 Ne make werre vp on me night ne day
 But be my frendes in all that ye may 1824
 I you foryeve this trespase euerydele
 And they hym sworn his askyng feire and wele
 And hym of lordship and mercy preyde
 And hem graunteth grace and than he seyde 1828
 To speke of royaſt lynage and richesse
 Though that she were a quene or a princesse
 Ecch of you both is worthy doutles
 To wedden whan tyme is but natheles 1832
 I speke as for my suster Emelye
 ffor whom ye haue this stryfe and ielousye
 Ye wote your self she may nat wedden two
 At ones though ye fighten euermo 1836
 That one of you all be hym loth or leef
 He mot go pype in an Ivy leef [*Here in margin, by corrector*]
 This is to seyn she may nat now haue both
 All be you neuer so ielous ne so wrothe 1840
 And for-thy I you put in this degree
 That ecch of you shaſt haue his destenye [*leaf 26*]
 As hym is shape and herkeneth in what wyse
 lo here your ende of that I shaſt devyse 1844
 My wiſh is this for plat conclusyon
 With-out ony replicacyon
 Yf that you liketh take it for the best
 That euerych of you shaſt gone where hym lest 1848
 ffrelly with-outen raunsoun or daunger
 And this day .L. wekes fer ne ner
 Euerych of you shaſt bryng an C. knyghtes
 Armed for lystes vp at all rightes 1852
 All redy to darreyne her bataill
 And this byhote I you withouten fayle
 Vp-on my trewth and as I am a knight
 That whether of you both that hath might 1856
 [This page, Egerton 2726.]

This is to seyn that whether he or thow
 May with his .C. as I spake of now
 Sleen his contrarye or out of lystes dryve
 Than shaft I yeve Emelye to wyve 1860
 To whom that fortune yeveth so feire a grace
 The lystes shaft I maken in this place
 And god so wysly on my soule rewe
 As I shaft even Iuge been and trewe 1864
 Ye shaft none other ende with me maken
 pat that one of you ne shaft be dede or taken
 And you think that this be wele ysayde
 Seith your avys and holdeth yow apayde 1868
 This is your ende and your conclusyon
 Who loketh lightly now but palamon
 Who spryngeth for ioy but Arcite
 Who kouth telle or who kouth it endite 1872
 The ioy that is maked in the place
 Whan Theseus hath done so feire a grace
 But doun on knees went euery maner wight
 And thonked him with all her hert and might 1876
 And namely the Thebens oft sythe
 And thus with gode hope and hert blythe
 They take her leve and homeward gon they ryde
 To Thebes with his olde walles wyde 1880

[PART III. No gap in the MS.]

i trowe men wolde deme yt negligence
 Yf I foryete to tellen the dispence [leaf 24, back]
 Of Theseus that gothe so besely
 That maken vp the lystes roially 1884
 That soch a noble teatre as yt was
 I dare wele seyn in this world there nas
 The circuite a myle was aboute
 Walled of stone and dyched all with-out 1888
 Rounde was the shap in manere of a compaas

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

full of degrees the height of .lx. paas
 That whan a man was set on o degree
 He letted nat his felaw for to see 1892
 Estward there stode a gate of marbyll white
 Westward right soch an other in the opposyte
 And shortly to concluden soch a place
 Was none in erthe as in so liteH a space 1896
 ffor in the londe there was no crafty man
 That geometrye or ars metryk can
 Ne portreyour ne kerver of ymages
 That Theseus ne yaf mete and wages 1900
 The teatre for to maken and devyse
 And for to done his right and sacrificise
 He Estward hath vp on the gate aboue
 In worshippe of venus goddes of loue 1904
 Done made an Awter and an oratorye
 And westward in memorie
 Of Mars he hath maked soch an other
 That cost largely of gold a fother 1908
 And Northward in a Toret on the waH
 Of Alabastre white and rede coraH
 An oratorye riche for to see
 In worshippe of Dyane the chastitee 1912
 Hath Theseus done wrought in a noble wyse
 But yit hade I forgeten to deuyse
 The noble kervyng and the purtratures
 The shape the countenance and the figures 1916
 That weren in thise oratories thre
 ffirst in the temple of venus maist pou se
 wrought on the waH full pitous to be-holde
 The broken slepes and the sighes colde 1920
 The sacred teres and the weymentyng
 The very strokes of the desiryng [leaf 25]
 That loue seruauntes in this lyf enduren
 The othes that her couenauntes assuren 1924
 Plesaunce and hope desire full hardynes

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Beaute youth bawdrye and riches
 Charmes and force lesynges flaterie
 Dispence besynes and ielousye 1928
 That wered of yelow gooldes a garland
 And a kukkow sitting on hir hand
 ffeestes instrumentes caroles daunces [Eg. ends.] 1931
 Lust and array / and alle the circumstaunces [Dd. begins, ll. 26]
 Of loue / which þat I rekened / and reken shalle
 Be ordre weren peynted / on the walle
 And moo than I can make of / mencioñ
 ffor sothly / al the Mount of Sytheron 1936
 There venus hath / hire principal dwellyng
 was shewed on the wal / in portraiying
 with al the gardeyn / and the lustynesse
 Nat was for-ȝeten / the porter Idelnesse 1940
 Ne Narsisus / the faire / of ȝore a-gon
 Ne ȝet the folie / of kyng Salamon
 Ne ȝet the gret strengthe / of Hercules
 The enchauntement / of Medea and Circes 1944
 Ne of Turnus / with the hardy fiers corage
 The riche Cresus / kaytif in seruage
 ¶ Thus may ȝe sen / þat wysdom ne richesse
 Beaute ne sleight / strengthe hardynesse 1948
 Ne may with venus / maken champertye
 ffor as hire lust / þe world þanne may she gye
 loo all þeise folk / so caught were in hire laas
 Til they for woo / ful often seid allas 1952
 ¶ Suffisith here / ensamples on or two
 And ȝet I koude reken / a M^t / mo
 The statute of venus / glorious for to se
 was naked / fletyng in the large see 1956
 And fro the nauyl down / al couered was
 with waughes grene / & bright as eny glas
 A Citole / in hire right hand / had she
 And on hire hede / ful semely for to se 1960
 A Rose garland / fressh & wel smellyng

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

- A-bouen hire hede / hire dowes flekeryng
 Biforñ hire stod / hir sone Cupido
 Vp-on hise shuldres / wynges had he two 1964
 And blynd he was / as it is oft sene
 A bowe he bar / and arwes bright & kene
 ¶ why shuld I nat eke / as wel telle þow aH
 The portrature / þat was vp-on the wahl 1968
 with-Inne the temple / of myghty Mars the rede
 Al peynted was the wal / in lengthe & brede
 lyke to the Estres / of the grisly place
 That hight the gret temple of Mars in Trace 1972
 In thilk cold frosty / regioñ
 There as Mars / hath his souereigne mansion [leaf 26, back]
 ffirst on the wal / was peynted a forest
 In which there dwelleth / neiþer man ne best 1976
 with knotty knarry / barreyne trees olde
 Of stubbes sharpe / and hedous to byholde
 In which there ran / a rombel in a swough
 As though a storme / shulde bresten euery bough 1980
 And downward from an hille / vnder a bent
 There stode a temple / of Mars Armypotent
 wrought al of borned stele / of which the entree
 was long and streyt / and gastly for to se 1984
 ¶ And þere-ouȝt cam a rage / and swich a veȝe ¶ id est
 That it mad al the gate / for to rese impetus
 The northern light / in at the dores shone
 ffor wyndowe on the wal / ne was þere none 1988
 Thorugh which men myghten / eny light discerne
 The dore was al / of Athamant eterne
 I-clenched ouerthwert / and endlong
 with Iren tough / and for to make it strong 1992
 Euery pillar / the temple to sustene
 was toȝne gret of Iren / bright & shene
 ¶ There saw I first / the derk ymagenyng
 Of felonye / and al the compassyng 1996
 The cruel / Ire / red as eny glede

The pyke purs / and eke the pale drede	
The smylere <i>with</i> þe knyf / vnder the cloke	
The shippen brennyng / <i>with</i> the blak smoke	2000
The treson of the morderyngs / in the bedde	
The open werre / with woundes al be-bledde	
Conteke with bloody knyf / and sharþ manace	
Al ful of chidyng / was this sory place	2004
The sleere of him self / ȝet saugh I there	
his hert blode / hath bathed al his heere	
The nail I-dreuen / in the shode a-nyght	
The colde deth / <i>with</i> mouth gapyng vp-right	2008
¶ A myddes of the temple / sat myschaunce	
with discomfort / & sory countenaunce	
ȝet saugh I woodnes / laughyng in his rage	
Armed / compleynt / ouȝt-hees / & fiers outrage	2012
The careyne in þe bussch / <i>with</i> throte koruen	
A / Mt / sleyn / and nouȝt of qualme I-storuen	
The teraunt with the pray / by force I-raft	
The Toun destroyed / þere was no þing I-laft	2016
ȝet saugh I brent / the shippes hoppesteres	
The honte strangelid / with the wylde beres	
The Sowe freetyng the child / right in the Cradel	[leaf 27]
The koke I-skaldede / for al his longe ladel	2020
Nouȝt was forȝeten / by þe infortune of Marte	
The Cartere ouer-ryden / with his carte	
Vnder the whele / ful lowe he lay a-doun	
There were also / of Martes deuysioñ	2024
The Barbour / and the Bocher / and the Smyth	
That forgeth sharpe swerdes / on the styth	
¶ And al aboue / depeynted in a Tour	
Saugh I conquest / sitting in gret honour	2028
with the sharp swerde / ouer his hede	
hangyng / by a sotel. twyned threde	
Depeynted was the slaȝter / of Iulius	
Of gret Nero / and of Anthonius	2032
Alle-be þat thilke tyme / they were vnborn	

3et was here deth / depeynted þere biforn
 By manassyng of Mars / right be figure
 So was it shewed / in that portrature 2036
 As is depeynted / in the sertres a-boue
 who shal, be slayn / or elles ded for loue
 Suffiseth on ensauple / in stories olde
 I may nat rekken hem alle / though I wolde 2040
 ¶ The statute of Mars / vp on a carte stode
 Armed and loked grym / as he were wode
 And ouer his hed / þere shynen two figures
 Of stories / þat ben cleped / in scriptures 2044
 That on Puella / that other Rubeus
 This god of armes / was a-rayed thus
 A wolf þere stode / biforn him at his fete
 with eyen rede / and of a man he ete 2048
 with sotil pencelles / was depeynted þis storie
 In redoutyng of Mars / & of his glorie
 ¶ Now to the Temple / of Diane the chaste
 As shortly as I can / I wyl me haste 2052
 To tellen 3ow / of the discipcioñ
 Depeynted by the walles / vp and doun
 Of huntyng / and of shamefast chastite
 There saugh I / how wooful Calistope 2056
 whan þat Diane / a-greued was with hire
 was turned fro a womman / to a Beere
 and aftir was she mad / þe lode sterre ¶ *vr̄sa maior*
 Thus was it peynted / I can sey 3ow no ferre 2060
 Hire sone is eke / a sterre as men may se
 There saugh I Dane / turned to a tre
 I mene nat / the goddes Diane
 But Penneus doughter / which þat hight Dane [leaf 27, back]
 There saugh I Atheoñ / an hert I-maked 2065
 ffor vengeance þat he saugh / Diane al naked
 I saw how þat hise houndes / han him caught
 And fretyn him / for þat þei knew him naught 2068
 3et peynted was / a litel forthermore

how Atthalaunce / honted the wylde bore
 And Meleagre / and many an other moo
 ffor which / Diane / wrouzt hem care and woo 2072
 There saw I many a noþer / wonder story
 The which me list nat drawe / to memory
 This goddesse on an hert / ful heye sette
 with smale houndes / al a-boute hire fete 2076
 And vndirnethe hire feet / she had a Mone
 waxyng it was / & shulde varysshe sone
 In gaude grene / hire stature clothed was
 with bow in hond / and arwes in a cas 2080
 hire eyen cast she / ful lowe a-doun
 There Pluto hath / his derke regioñ
 A womman trauaillyng / was hire biforñ
 But for hire child / so longe was vn-born 2084
 fful pytously Lucyna / gan she calle
 And seide help / for þou maist best of alle
 wel coude he peynt lifly / that it wrought
 with many a floreyñ / he the hewes bought 2088
 ¶ Now ben theise lystes mad / and Theseus
 That at his gret cost / arrayed thus
 The temples / and the teatre euery dele
 Whan it was don / him liked wonder wele 2092
 But stynte I wyl / of Theseus a lyte
 And speke of Palamoñ / and of Arcite
 ¶ The day approacheth / of here returnynge
 That euerych shulde / an / C / knyghtis brynge 2096
 The bataylle to darreyne / as I 3ow told
 And to Athenes / here couenaunt for to hold
 hath euerych of hem / brought an / C / knyghtes
 wel armed for the werre / at alle rightes 2100
 And sekerly / there trowed many a man
 That neuere sithen / þat the world bygan
 As for to speke / of knyghthod of here hond
 As-fer as god hath maked / see and lond 2104
 Nas of so fewe / so noble a companye

ffor euerych wyght / þat loued cheualrye
 And wold his thanks / han a passaunt name
 Hath preyed þat he myght / ben of that game [leaf 28] 2108
 And wel was him / that ther-to chosen was
 ffor if there fel / to-morwen swich a kaas
 3e knowen wele / that euery lusty knyght
 That loueth paramours / and hath his myght 2112
 Were it in Engelond / or elles where
 They wolde here thanks / wyllen to be there
 To fighten for a lady / benedicite
 It were a lusty sight / for to se 2116
 ¶ And right so ferden they / with Palamon
 with him there went / knyghtes many on
 Some wold ben armed / in haberioun
 And in a breestplate / and a light Iepoun 2120
 And some wold haue / a peyre plates large
 And some wold haue / a spruce sheld & targe
 And some wold ben armed / on hise legges wele
 And haue an Ax / & some a mace of stele 2124
 There nys no newe gyse / þat it nas old
 Armed were they / as I haue 3ow told
 Euerych after / hise opynion
 ¶ There maist þou se / comyng with Palamon 2128
 lygurge him self / the grete kyng of Trace
 Blak was his berd / and manly was his face
 The sercles of hise eyen / in his hede
 They gloweden / betwix 3elwe & rede 2132
 And like a griffon / loked he a-boute
 with kempe heeres / on hise browes stoute
 hys lymes grete / hise braunes hard & strong
 his shuldres brode / his armes grete & long 2136
 And as the gyse was / in his contre
 fful heye / vp on a chayer of gold / stod he
 with foure white Boles / in the trays
 In stede of Cotearmure / ouer his harneys 2140
 with nayles 3elwe / and bright as eny gold

he had a beres skyn / cole blak for old
 his long her / was kembed behynde his bak
 As ony rauenes fether / it shone for blak 2144
 A wrethe of gold / arme gret / of huge weyght
 Vp on his hede / and ful of stones bryght
 Of fyne Rubies / and Diamsautes
 Abouten his chaier / there went white alautes 2148
 Twenty and mo / as grete as ony stere
 To honten at the lyon / or the deere
 And folwed him / with mosellis faste I-bounde
 Colored of gold / and torettes fyled rounde 2152
 An C. lordes / had he in his route [leaf 25, back]
 Armed ful wele / with wertes sterne & stoute
 ¶ with Arcita / in stories as men fynde
 The grete Emytrius / the kyng of Inde 2156
 vp-on a steede Bay / trapped in stel
 Couered with a cloth of gold / dyapred wel
 Cam ridyng lyke the god / of armes Mars
 His Cotearmure / was of cloth of Tars 2160
 Couched with perles / white rounde & grete
 his sadel was of brent gold / newe I-bete
 A mantelet / vp-on his shulder hangyng
 Bret ful of Rubies / rede as fir sparkelyng 2164
 his crispe heer / lyke rynges was I-ronne
 And that was ȝelwe / and gletered as the sonne
 His nose was hey / his eyen bryght Citryñ
 His lippes rounde / his colour was sangwyn 2168
 A fewe fraknes / in his face I-spreynt
 Betwixen ȝelwe / and somdel blak I-meynt
 And as a lyon / he his lokyng caste
 Of xxvth ȝere / his age I caste 2172
 His berd was wel bygonne / for to springe
 his throte was as a trompe / thonderynge
 Vp-on his hede / he wered a loirrer grene
 ffressh and lusty / ffor to sene 2176
 Vp-on his hand he bar / for his deduyt

- An Egle tame / as ony lilly whyt
 An C / lordes / had he with him there
 Alle armed saue here hedes / in al here gere 2180
 fful richely / in alle manere thynges
 ffor trosteth wele / that Dukes Erles kynges
 were gadred / in this noble companye
 ffor loue & for ences / of chyualrye 2184
 A-boute this kyng / þere ran on euery part
 fful many a tame lyon / and leopart
 ¶ And in this wyse / peise lordes alle and Some
 Ben on the Sonday / to the Cite come 2188
 A-boute prime / and in the Toun a-light
 This Theseus þis Duke / this worthy knyght
 whan he had brouȝt hem / in-to his Citee
 And Inned euerych of hem / at his degree 2192
 He festeth hem / and doth so gret labour
 To esen hem / and don hem all honour
 That ȝet man wenen / þat no mannys wytte
 Of none astate / ne coude amenden ytte 2196
 ¶ The mynstralsie / the seruyse at the feest
 The grete ȝiftes / to the most and lest [leaf 20]
 The riche a-ray / of Theseus paleys
 Ne who sat first ne last / vp on the deys 2200
 what ladies fairest ben / and best daunsynge
 Or which of hem / kan best daunce or synge
 Ne who most feynnyngly / speketh of loue
 what haukes seten / on the perches a-boue 2204
 what houndes ligen / on the flore a-doune
 Of al this / make I no mencion
 But al þe effect / that thynketh me the best
 Now cometh the poynt / herkeneth if ȝow lest 2208
 ¶ The Sonday nyght / or day bygan to springe
 whan Palamon / the lark herde synge
 al though it nere nat day / by houres two
 ȝet song the lark / and Palamon right tho 2212
 with holy hert / and hey corage

He rod to wenden / on his pilgrimage
 Vn-to the blisseful / Sitheria benigne
 I mene venus / honorable and digne 2216
 And in hire houre / he walketh forth a paas
 Vn-to the lystes / there hire temple was
 And doun he kneleth / and with humble chere
 And herte soor / he seide as ȝe shuln here 2220
Fairst of fair / O lady myn / venus
 Doughter to Ioue / and spouse to vulcanus
 Thow glader / of þe mounste of Scitheron
 ffor thilke loue / þou haddeest / to Adoon 2224
 Haue pyte / of my bytter teres smerte
 And take myn humble preyer / at thyn herte
 Allas I ne haue / no langage to telle
 The effect / and the turmentz of myn helle 2228
 Myn hert may nat / myn harmes bywrye
 I am so sorweful / that I can nat seye
 But mercy lady bright / that knowest wele
 My thought / and seest what harmes þat I fele 2232
 Considre al this / and rewe vp-on my sore
 As wysly / as I shal for euere more
 Perfourmyng be my myght / thy trewe seruauant to be
 And holden werre alwey / with chastite 2236
 That make I myn a-vow / so ȝe me helpe
 I kepe nat of armes / for to ȝelpe
 Ne I ne ask nouȝt to-morwe / to han victorie
 Ne renoñ in this caas / ne veyn glorie 2240
 Of prys of armes / blowen vp and doun
 But I wold haue fully / possession ¶ *nota bene*
 Of Emelie / and dye in thy seruyse [leaf 23, back]
 ffynde þou the maner / & in what wyse 2244
 I recche nat / but it may better be
 Than victorie / of hem / or they of me
 So that I haue my lady / in myne armes
 ffor though so be / that Mars is god of armes 2248
 ȝoure vertu is so gret / in heuene a-boue

That if þow list / I shal wel haue my loue
 Thy temple wol I worshiþe / euere mo
 And on thyn auter / where I ride or go 2252
 I wyl don sacrifice / and fires bete
 And if þe wyl nat so / my lady swete
 Than preye I the / to-morwe with a spere
 That Arcita me / thorough þe hert bere 2256
 Than rekke I nought / whan I haue lost my lif
 Though þat Arcita / wynne hire to his wyf
 This is the effect / and ende of my preyere
 þeue me my lyf / þou blisseful lady dere 2260
 ¶ ¶ whan þat the orison / was don of Palamoñ
 His sacrifice he dide / and that a-noñ
 fful pitously / with alle the circumstaunceþ
 Alle telle i nat / as now / his obseruaunceþ 2264
 But at the laste / the stature of venus shoke
 And made a signe / wher-by þat he toke
 That his prayer / accepted was that day
 ffor though the signe / shewed a delay 2268
 þet wist he wele / that graunted was his bone
 And with glad herte / he went him hom ful sone
THe thridde houre / in-equall þat Palamoñ
 Began to venus temple / for to gon 2272
 vp ros the sonne / and vp ros Emelye
 And to the temple of Diane / gan hye
 Hire maydenes / þat she thidder with hire ladde
 fful redily with hem / the fyr they hadde 2276
 The encence / the clothes / and the remenaunt alle
 That to the sacrifice / longen shalle
 The hornes ful of mede / as was the gyse
 There lacked nouȝt / to don hire sacrifice 2280
 Smokyng the temple / ful of clothes faire
 This Emelye / with herte debonaire
 hir body vessh / with water of a welle
 But how she dide / hir rite / I dar nat telle 2284
 But it be ony thyng / in general

And ȝete it were / a game / to heren al [leaf 30]
 To him þat meneth wel / it were no charge
 But it is good / a man ben at his large 2288
 hire bright heer was kembed / vn-tressed all
 A corone of a grene Oke / seriall
 Vp-on hire hed was set / ful fair and mete
 Two fires vp-on the auter / gan she bete 2292
 And dide hire thynges / as men may byholde
 In stace of Thebes / and othere bokes olde
 whan kynled was the fyr / with pytous chere
 Vn-to Diane she spak / as ȝe may here 2296
O chast goddesse / of the wodes grene
 To whom / bothe heuen / erthe / and see / ys sene
 Quene of the regne of Pluto / Derk and lowe
 Goddesse of Maydenes / that myn hert hast knowe 2300
 fful many a ȝere / and wost what I desire
 As kepe me fro thy vengeance / & thyn Ire
 That Antheon / a-bought cruelly
 Chaste goddesse / wel wost thow that I 2304
 Desire to be a Mayden / al my lif
 Ne neuere wyl I be / no loue / ne wyf
 I am þou wost ȝet / of thy companye
 A Maide / and loue huntyng and venerie 2308
 And for to walken / in the wodes wyld
 And nat to ben a wyf / & be with child
 Nought wol I knowe / companye of man
 Now help lady / sith ȝe may and kan 2312
 ffor tho thre formes / that þou hast in the
 And Palamon / that hath swich loue to me
 And eke Arcite / that loueth me so sore
 This grace I preye the / with-oute more 2316
 As send loue and pes / betwix hem two
 And fro me turne a-vey / here hertes so
 That al here hot loue / and here desire
 And alle here besy turmenteȝ / and here fire 2320
 Be quenched / and turned / in a-nother place

And if so be / þou wylt nat do me grace
 Of if my destenye / be I-shape so
 That I shal nedes haue / on of hem two 2324
 As send me him / that most desireth me
 Byhold goddesse / of clene chastite
 The bitter teres / that on my chekys falle
 Syn þou art Mayde / and kepere of vs alle 2328
 My maydenhode þou kepe / and wel conserue
 And while I lyue / a Mayde I wol the serue [leaf 30, back]
 ¶ And the fires brennen / vp-on the auter clere
 while Emelye / was thus / in hire preyere 2332
 But sodeynly she sey / a sight queynte
 ffor right a-non / on of the fires queynte
 And quyked a-geyn / and after that a-noñ
 That other fir was queynt / and al a-goñ 2336
 And as it queynt / it made a whistelyng
 As don theise wete brondes / in here brennyng
 And at the brondes ende / ouȝt ran a-noñ
 As it were bloody dropes / many on 2340
 ffor which so sore a-gast / was Emelye
 That she was wol ny mad / and gan to crye
 ffor she ne wyst / what it signified
 But only for the feer / thus hath she cried 2344
 And wepte / þat it was pite for to here
 ¶ And ther-withal / Diane gan a-pere
 with bowe in hond / right as an huntresse
 And seide doughter / stynt thyn heuynesse 2348
 Among the goddes hie / it is a-fermed
 And by eterne word / wryten and confermed
 Thow shalt ben wedded / vn-to on of tho
 That han for the / so meche care and woo 2352
 But vn-to which of hem / I may nat telle
 ffare wel / I may no lengere dwelle
 The fires which / that on myn auter brenne
 Shuln the declaren / er that þow go henne 2356
 Thyn auenture of loue / as in this caas

And with þat word / the arwes in the caas
 Of the goddesse / clateren faste and rynges
 And forth she went / and mad a vanasshynges 2360
 ffor which this Emelye / astoynd was
 And seide / what amountith this / allas
 I putte me / in thyn proteccioñ
 Diane / and in thyn disposicioñ 2364
 And hom she goth a-non / the next wey
 This is the effect / there is no more to sey
 ¶ The next houre / of Mars / folwyng this
 Arcite / vn-to the temple / walked is 2368
 Of fiers Mars / to don his sacrefice
 with alle the rightes / of his payen wyse
 with pitous hert / and hie deuocioñ
O Ryght thus to Mars / he seid his orisoñ 2372
 Strong god / that in the regnes cold
 Of Trace / honoured art / and god I-hold
 And hast in euery regne / and euery lond [leaf 31]
 Of armes / alle the brydeles in þin hond 2376
 And hem fortunest / as the list deuyse
 Accepte of me / my pitous sacrificie
 If so be / that my ȝouthes / may deserue
 And þat my myght / be worthy for to serue 2380
 Thyn godhed / that I may be on of thyne
 Than preye I the / to rewe vp-on my pyne
 ffor thilk pyne / and thilk hote fyre
 In which / þou whilom / brendest for desire 2384
 whan that þou vsedest / the beaute
 Of fair ȝong and fressh / Venus fre
 And haddest hire in armes / at thy wylle
 Al-though the ones / on a tyme mys-felle 2388
 whan Vulcanus / had caught the in his laas
 And fond the liggynges / by his wyf / Allas
 ffor thilk sorwe / that was tho in thyn hert
 Haue reuthe as wel / vp-on my peynes smert 2392
 I am ȝong / and vnkonyng / as þou wost

And as I trowe / with loue offended most
 That euere was ony / lyues creature
 ffor she þat doth me / al this woo endure 2396
 Ne reccheth neuere / wheiþer I synke or flete
 And wel I wot / or she me mercy hete
 I mot with strengthe / wynne hire in the place
 And wel I wot / with-outen help & grace 2400
 Of the / ne may my strengthe / nat a-vaille
 Than help me lord / to-morwe in my bataille
 ffor thilk fire / that whilom brent the
 As wele as thilk fire / now brenneth me 2404
 And do þat I to-morwe / may han victorie
 Myn be the trauaylle / & thyn be the glorie
 Thy souereygne temple / wyl I most honoure
 Of ony place / and alwey most laboure 2408
 In thy plesaunce / and in thy craftes strong
 And in thy temple / I wol my baner hong
 And alle the armes / of my companye
 And euere mo / vn-to that day I dye 2412
 Eterne fyre / I wyl byfore the fynde
 And eke to this a-vow / I wyl me bynde
 My berd myn her / þat hangeth long a-doun
 That neuere ȝet felte / nor offensiõn 2416
 Of Rasour ne of shere / I wyl the ȝeue
 And ben thyn trewe seruauzt / whyl I lyue
 Now lord haue reuthe / vp-on my sorwes sore [leaf 31, back]
 ȝeue me the victorie / I aske the no more 2420
 ¶ The prayer stynt / of Arcita the strong
 The rynges of the temple dore / þat hong
 And eke the dores / clateren ful faste
 Of which Arcita / som-what him a-gaste 2424
 The fires brent / vp-on the auter bryght
 That it gan / al the temple for to light
 A swete smel / a-non / þe ground vp ȝaue
 And Arcita a-non / his hand vp haue 2428
 And more encens / in-to the fyr he cast

with othere riȝtes mo / and at the last

¶ The statute of Mars / bygan his hauberk ryngē
And with þat soun / he herd a *murmuryngē* 2432

fful lowe and dym / and seide thus / victorie
ffor which / he ȝaf to Mars / honour and glorie

¶ And thus with ioie / and hope wel to fare
Arcite a-non / vn-to his In is fare 2436

As fayn as foul / is of the bryȝht sonne

And right a-non / swiȝh a strif / þere is bygonne
ffor thilke *grauntyng* / in þe heuene a-boue

Betwix venus / the goddessē of loue 2440

And Mars / the sterne god armypotent

That Iubiter was besy / it to stent

Til þat the pale / Saturnus / the colde

That knew so manye / of auentures olde 2444

ffond in his old experience / and art

That the ful sone / hath plesed euery part

As soth is seid / elde hath gret auauntage ¶ *Nota*

In elde is bothe wysdom / and vsage 2448

Men may the olde at renne / and nat at rede

Saturne a-non / to stynten stryf and drede

Al be it / þat it is / a-geyn his kynde

Of al this strif / he can remedye fynde 2452

¶ My dere doughter Venus / *quod* Saturne

My cours / that hath so wyde / for to turne

Hath more powere / than wot ony man

Myn is the drenchyng / in the see so wan 2456

Myn is the prysoñ / in the derke Cote

Myn is the strangelyng / & hangyng by the throte

The murmur / and the cherles rebellyng

The groynyng / and the pryue enpoysenyng 2460

I do vengeance / and pleyn correccion

While I dwelle in þe signe / of the lyoñ

Myn is the ruyne / of the heye halles

The fallyng of the Toures / and of the walles [leaf 32] 2464

Vp-on the Mynour / or the Carpentere

I slow Sampson / shakynge the pylere
And myne ben / the maladyes colde
The derk treson / and the castes olde 2468
My lokyng is / the fader of pestilence
Now wepe no more / I shal don diligence
That Palamon / þat is thyn owen knyght
Shal haue his lady / as þou hast him hight 2472
This Mars / shal helpe his knyght 3et / natheles
Be-twix 3ow / there mot / be som tyme pees
Al be 3e nat / of 3oo compleccion
That causeth al day swich deuySION 2476
I am thyn al redy / at thy wyll
wepe now no more / I wol thy lust fulfille
Now wol I stynt / of the goddes a-boue
Of Mars and of Venus / goddesses of loue 2480
And tellen 3ow / as pleyuly as I can
The grete effect / for which þat I bygan

[Part IV. No gap in the MS.]

Gret was the fest / at Athenes that day
And eke the lusty seson / of that May 2484
Made euery wyght / to ben in swich plesance
That al that Monday / Iusten they and daunce
And spenden it / in venus hey seruyse
And by the cause / that they shulden ryse 2488
Erly for to sen / the grete sight
vn-to here reest / went they at nyght
And on þe morwe / whan the day gan spryng
Of hors and harneys / noyse and clateryng 2492
There was / in hostries al a-boute
And to the Paleys / rod þere many a route
Of lordes / vp-on stedes and palfreyes
¶ There maist þou sen / deuysyng of harneys 2496
So vnkouth / and so riche / and wrouzt so wele
Of goldsmythrie / of browdyng and of stele

The sheldes bright / testres and trappures
 Gold hewen helmes / hauberkes Cotearmures 2500
 Lordes in parmentis / or here courseres
 knyghtes of retenue / and eke squyeres
 Naylyng the speres / and helmes bokelyng
 Gynggyng of sheldes / with layneres lassyng 2504
 There as nede is / they were no thyng Idel
 The fomy steedes / on the goldene brydel
 Gnawying / and faste the armures also
 with fyle and hamer / prykyng to and fro 2508
 Jemen on fote / and comunes many on [leaf 22, back]
 with shorte staues / thikke as they may gon
 Pipes / trompes / Nakeres Clariones
 That in the bataill / blowne bloody sownes 2512
 The paleys ful of peeple / vp and down
 here thre / there /x/ holdyng here question
 Diuynying of theise Thebans / knyghtes two
 Somme seyden thus / som seyden it shal be so 2516
 Somme heldyn with him / with the blak berde
 Some with the balled / some with the thikke herede
 Somme seide he loked grym / and he wold fyght
 he hath a sparthe / of twenty pound of wyght 2520
 Thus was the halle / ful of dyuynying
 longe after the sonne / gan vp spryng
 ¶ The grete Theseus / of his slep a-waked
 with mynstralsie / and noise þat was maked 2524
 he held 3et the chaumbres / of his paleys riche
 Til þat the Thebans knyghtes / bothe I-liche
 Houndred / weren in-to the paleys fet
 Duke Theseus / is at the wyndowe set 2528
 Arrayed / right as he were / a god in trone
 The peeple preseth / thederward ful sone
 Hym for to sen / and don hey reuerence
 And eke to herken / his hest / and his sentence 2532
 ¶ An heraud on a skaffold / made an oo
 Til al the noyse of the peeple / was I-do

And whan he saw / the peeple of noyse al stille
 Thus shewed he / the myghty Dukes wyllle 2536
 ¶ The lord hath / of heye discrecion
 Considered / that it were destruccion
 To gentil blode / to fighten in the gyse
 Of mortal bataille / now in this emprise 2540
 wherfore to shapen / that they shal nat deye
 he wol his first purpos / modifie
 ¶ No man perfore / vp payne of losse of lyf
 No maner shote / ne pollax / ne short knyf 2544
 In-to the lystes sende / or theder bryng
 No short swerd for to steke / with poynt bityng
 Ne noman ne drawe / ne bere it by his syde
 Ne noman shal / vn-to his felawe ryde 2548
 But oo cours / with a sharp I-grounde spere
 ffoyne if him list / on fote him self to were
 And he þat is at myschef / shal be take
 And nouȝt slayn / but be brouȝt vn-to þe stake 2552
 That shal ben ordeyned / on eyther syde
 And thidder he shal by force / and there a-byde [leaf 33]
 And if so falle / that the cheunteyn be take
 On either syde / or elles sle his make 2556
 No lengere shal / the turnayng laste
 God spede ȝow go forth / and ley on faste
 with long swerd and with mace / fighteth ȝoure fille
 Go now ȝoure wey / this is the lordes wyllle 2560
 ¶ The voys of þe peeple / toucheth the heuene
 So loude crieden they / with mery steuene
 God saue swich a lord / þat is so good
 he ne wyl / no destruccion of blod 2564
 ¶ Vp gon the trumpes / and the melodye Nota
 And to the lystes / riȝt the cumpanye
 By ordinaunce / þorugh-ouȝt the Citee large
 Honged with cloth of gold / and nat with sarge 2568
 fful lyke a lord / this noble Duke gan ryde
 Theise two Thebans / vp-on either side

And after rod the Quene / and Emelye
 And after that / a-nother companye 2572
 Of on and other / after here degree
 And thus they passen / thorough-ouȝt the Citee
 And to the lystes / come they be tyme
 It nas nouȝt of the day / ȝet fully pryme 2576
 ¶ Whan set was Theseus / ful riche and heye
 ypolita the Quene / and Emelye
 And other ladies / in degrees a-boute
 Vn-to the setes / preseth euery route 2580
 And westward / porugh the gates / vnder Marte.
 Arcite / and eke the C / of his parte
 with baner red / is entred right a-non
 ¶ And in þat selue moment / Palamoun 2584
 Is vnder venus / estward in the place
 with baner whit / & hardy chere and face
 In al the world / to seken vp and down
 So euene / with-oute variacion 2588
 There ne is / swich companyes twey
 ffor there was non / so wys þat koude sey
 That any had / of other auantage
 Of worthynesse / ne of estate ne Age 2592
 So euen were they / chosen for to gesse
 And in two renges / faire they hem dresse
 whan þat here names / red were euerychofi
 That in here noumbre / gyle were þere non 2596
 Tho were the gates shette / and cried was loude
 Do now ȝoure deuer / ȝonge knyghtes proude
 ¶ The heraudes left here prekyng / vp and down
 Now ryngen trompes loude / and Clarioun 2600
 There nys nomore to sey / but west and Est ¶ Nota
 In gon the speres / ful sadly in the rest [leaf 53, back]
 In goth the sharp spore / in-to the syde
 þere se men who can Iuste / and who can ryde 2604
 They sheueren shaftes / vp-on sheldes thikke
 he feleth þorugh the hert spone / the prikke

Vp springen speres / xx^{ti} fote on height
 Ouȝt gon the swerdes / as the siluer bright 2608
 The helmes they to-hewen / and to-shrede
 Ouȝt brest the blod / with sterne stremes rede
 with myghty maces / to bons they / to-brest
 he þorugh the thikkeſt / of the throng gan threſt 2612
 There stomblen ſteedes ſtrong / & doun goth al
 He rolleth vnder fote / as doth a bal
 He foyneth on his fet / with his tronchoñ
 And he him hurteth / with his hors a-doun 2616
 he thurgh the body is hurt / and ſithen take
 Maugre his hede / and brouȝt vn-to the ſtake
 As forward was / and þere he muſt a-byde
 A-nother lad is / on þat other ſyde 2620
 And ſom tyme / doth Theſeus / to reſte
 hem / to refreſſhe / & drynken if hem liſte
 ¶ ¶ fful ofte a day / han theiſe Thebans two
 To-geder mette / and wrouȝt his felawe woo 2624
 Vnhorſed hath ech other / of hem tweye
 There naſ no Tygre / in the vale of Galgopheye
 whan þat hire whelp were ſtole / whan it is liſte
 So cruel on the hunte / as is Arcite 2628
 ffor ielous hert / vp-on this Palamoñ
 Ne in belmarie / there nys no fel lyoñ
 That hunted is / or for his hunger wood
 Ne of his pray / deſireth ſo the blod 2632
 As Palamoñ / to ſlen his foo Arcite
 The ielous ſtrokes / on here helmes byte
 Ouȝt ronnethe blod / on both here ſides rede
 ¶ ¶ Somtyme an ende þere is / of euery dede 2636
 ffor er the ſonne / vn-to the reſt went
 The ſtrong kyng / Emetrius / gan hent
 This Palamoñ / as he fauȝt with Arcite
 And mad his ſwerd depe / in his fleſh to byte 2640
 And by the force of xx^{ti} / is he take
 vnȝolden / and I-drawen / vn-to the ſtake

And in the rescuys / of þis Palamoñ
 The strong kyng lygurge / is born a-doun 2644
 And kyng Emetrius / for al his strengthe
 Is born ouȝt of his sadel / a swerd lengthe [leaf 24]
 So hit him Palamoñ / er he were take
 But al for nought / he was brouȝt to þe stake 2648
 his hardy hert / myȝht him help right nought
 he must abide / whan that he was caught
 By force / and eke by composicion
 ¶ who sorweth now / but wooful Palamoñ 2652
 That mot no more / gon a-geyn to fight
 And whan that Theseus / had seyn þis sight
 Vn-to the folk / that foughten thus echoñ
 He cried hoo no more / for it is doñ 2656
 I wol be trewe Iugge / and no partie
 Arcite of Thebes / shal haue Emelie
 That by his fortune / hath hire faire I-wonne
 A-non there is a noyse / of peeple bygonne 2660
 ffor ioye of this / so loude and hye with-alle
 It semed that the listes / shulde falle
 ¶ what can now / fayr venus don a-boue
 what seith she now / what doth this Quene of loue 2664
 But wepeth so / wantyng of hire wylle
 Til that hire teres / in the listes felle
 She seide / I am a-shamed douteles
 ¶ Saturnus seide / doughter hold þin pes 2668
 Mars hath his wylle / his knyȝht hath al his bone
 And be myn hede / þou shalt ben eesed sone
 The trompoures / with the loude Mynstralsye
 The heraudes / that ful loude / ȝelle and crye 2672
 Ben in here wele / for Ioye of Daun Arcite
 But herkeneth now / and stynteth noyse a lite
 which a miracle / there fel a-non
 This fiers Arcite / hath of his helm doñ 2676
 And on a Courser / for to shewe his face
 he preketþ endlong / the large place


lokyng vp-ward / vp-on this Emelye
 And she ageyn him cast / a frendly eye 2680
 [For wommen as speketh the comune [Ex. 3796, leaf 24;
left out of Dd.]
 They folowe all þe fauour of fortune] [leaf 24, back]
 And she was al his cher / as in his herte
 Ouzt of the ground / a fire infernel sterte 2684
 ffro Pluto sent / at the request of Saturne
 ffor which / his hors for fer / gan to turne
 And lepte a-side / and foundred as he lepe
 And er that Arcite / may taken kepe 2688
 he pyght him on the pomel / of his hede
 That in the place / he lay as he were ded
 his brest to-brosten / with his sadel bowe
 As blak he was / as ony cole or crowe [leaf 24, back] 2692
 So was the blode / I-ronnen in his face
 ¶ A-non he was born / ouzt of the place
 With hert sore / to Theseus paleys
 Tho was he coruen / ouzt of his harneys 2696
 And in a bed I-brought / ful fair and blyue
 ffor he was zet / in memorie and lyue
 And alwey cryyng / after Emelye
 Duke Theseus / with al his companye 2700
 Is comen hom / to Athenes his Citee
 With all blisse / and gret solempnyte
 Al be it / that this auenture was falle
 He nolde nat / discomforten hem alle 2704
 Men seide eke / Arcite shal nat deye
 he shal ben heled / of his maladye
 And of a-noþer thyng / they were as fayn
 That of hem alle / was non I-slayn 2708
 Alle were they sore I-hurt / and namely on
 That with a spere was thirled / þorugh þe brest bon
 To opere woundes / and to broken armes
 Somme hadden salue / & somme hadden charmes 2712
 ffermacies of herbes / and eke saue
 They dronken / for þei wold here lyues haue

ffor which this noble Duke / as he wel can
 Comforteth / and honoureth / euery man 2716
 And mad reuel / al the longe nyght
 Vn-to the straunge lordes / as was right
 ¶ ¶ Ne there was holden / non discomfityng
 But as a Iustes / or a turneyeng 2720
 ffor sothly there was / no disconfiture
 ffor fallyng nys nat / but an auenture
 Ne to ben had by force / vn-to the stake
 Vnfolden / and with / xxⁱⁱ / knyghtes take 2724
 O persone a-lone / with-outen mo
 And haried forth / by arm foot and too
 And eke his steede / dreuen forth with staues
 With fotmen / bothe ȝemen & eke knaues 2728
 It nas aretted him / no velanye
 There may no man / clepe it cowardie
 ¶ ¶ ffor which a-non / Duke Theseus let crie
 To stynten al rancour / and Envie 2732
 The gree as wele / of o side as of other
 And either side elyke / as others brother
 And ȝaf hem ȝiftes / after here degree
 And fully held a fest / dayes thre 2736
 And conueyed the kyngis / worthily
 Out of his toun / a iourne largely [leaf 35]
 And hom went euery man / the right way
 There was no more / but fare wel haue good day 2740
 Of this bataille / I wol no more endyte
 But speke of Palamon / and of Arcite
 Swelleth the brest of Arcite / and the sore
 Encreseth / at his hert / more and more 2744
 The clotered blod / for ony lechecraft
 Corrupteth / and is in his bouke I-laft
 That neither veyn blod / ne ventusyng
 Ne drynk of herbes / may ben his helpyng 2748
 The vertue of explyf / or AnimaH
 ffor thilk vertue / cleped naturaH

Ne may the venym voide / ne expelle
 The pipes of his longen / gonen swelle 2752
 And euery lacerte- / in his brest a-doun
 [Is shent with venym and corrupcoun] [Eg. 2726, leaf 35;
left out of Dd.]
 Him gayneth nought to gete his lyf
 Vomyt vpward ne donward laxatyf 2756
 All is brosten þat regioun]
 Nature hath now / no dominacioñ
 And certeynly / there nature wyl nat werche
 ffare wel Phisyk / go bere þe man to cherche ¶ *verum est*
 This is al and som / that Arcite mot deye 2761
 ffor which he sendeth / after Emelye
 And Palamoñ / that was his Cosyn dere
 Than seide he thus / as 3e shuln after here 2764
 ¶ Nat may the wooful spirit / in myn hert
 Declare a poynt / of alle my sorwes smert
 To 3ow my lady / that I loue most
 But I quethe / the /seruyse of my gost 2768
 To 3ow / a-bouen euery creature
 Sen that my lif / may no lengere dure
 Allas the woo / allas the peynes stronge ¶ *Nota bene*
 That I for 3ow haue / suffred / and so longe 2772
 Allas the deth / allas myn Emelye
 Allas departyng / of oure companye
 Allas myn hertes Quene / allas my wyf
 Myn hertes lady / endere of my lif 2776
 What is this world / what asken men to haue
 Now with his loue / now in his cold graue
 [Allone with-out ony cumpany] [Eg. 2726, leaf 35, back;
left out of Dd.]
 Farewele my swete farewele myn Emely 2780
 And soft take me in your armes twey
 For the loue of god and herkeneth what I sey]
 ¶ I haue here with my Cosyn / Palamoñ
 had strif and rancour / many a day a-goñ 2784
 ffor loue of 3ow / and for my Ielousie
 And Iubiter / so wysly / my soule gye
 [Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

To spoken of a seruunt / proprely
 with circumstaunce / all trewely 2788
 That is to seyn / trewe / honour / kny3thede
 Wysdom humblesse / estate / and heigh kynrede
 ffredom / and al that longeth / to that art [leaf 25, back]
 So Iubiter haue / of my soule part 2792
 As in this world right now / ne knowe I non
 So worthy to ben loued / as Palamon
 That serueth 3ow / and wel don al his lyf
 And if þat euere / 3e schuln ben a wyf 2796
 fforȝete nat Palamoñ / the gentil man
 ¶ And with that word / his speche faile began
 ffor fro his fete / vp to his brest was come
 The colde of deth / that had him ouercome 2800
 And ȝet more-ouer / for in his armes two
 The vitayll strengthe / is lost and al a-go
 Oonly the intellect / with-uten more
 That dwelleth / in his hert / seke and sore 2804
 Gan faylen / whan the hert feleth deth
 Dusked ys hise eyen two / and faileth breth
 But on his lady / ȝet cast he his eye
 His last word / was mercy Emelye 2808
 his spirit chaunged hens / & went there
 As I cam neuere / I kan nat tellen where
 Therfore I stynt / I am no diuinistre
 Of soules fynde I nouȝt / in this registre 2812
 Ne me ne list / thilke opinions to telle
 Of hem / though þat þei wryten / where they dwelle
 Arcite is cold / there Mars his soule gye
 Now wol I spoken forth / of Emelye 2816
 ¶ Shryghte / Emelye / and howleth Palamoñ
 And Theseus his Suster / tok a-noñ
 Swoughnyng / & bar hire / fro the corps a-way
 What helpeth it / to tarien forth the day 2820
 To tellen how she wepte / both eue and morwe
 ffor in swich cas / wommen han swich sorwe

Whan þat here husbondes / ben fro hem a-go
 That for the more *part* / they sorwen so 2824
 Or ellis fallen / in swiċh a maladie
 That at the last / certeynly they deye
 ¶ ♀ Infinite ben the sorwes / and the teeres
 Of olde folk / and folk of tendre ȝeres 2828
 In al the Toun / for the deth / of this Theban
 ffor him þere wepeth / bothe child & man
 So gret a wepyng / was þere non certeyn
 Whan Ector was brought / al fressh I-slayn 2832
 To Troye / allas the pyte that was there
 Cracchyng of chekes / rendyng eke of here
 Why woldest þou be ded / theise wommen crye
 And haddest gold I-now / and Emelye [leaf 36] 2836
 ¶ ♀ No man myght gladen / Theseus
 Sauyng his old fader / Egeus
 That knew this worldlis / transmutaciō
 As he had seyn it chaunge / boþe vp & douñ 2840
 Ioye after woo / and woo after gladnes
 And shewed him ensample / and lyknes
 Right as there deyed neuere man / *quod* he ¶ Nota
 That he ne loued in erthe / in som degre ¶ Argumentum
 Right so þere lyued neuere man / he seide 2845
 In al this world / þat somtyme he ne deyede
 This world nys but a thurgh-feire / ful of woo
 And we ben pilgrimes / passyng to and froo 2848
 Deth is an ende / of euery worldly sore
 And ouer al this / ȝet seide he meche more
 To this effect / ful wysly to enhortē
 The peep̃le / þat they shuld him / recomforte 2852
 ¶ ♀ Duke Theseus / with al his bysy cure
 Oast¹ now where / that the sepulture [1 for Cast]
 Of goode Arcite / may best I-maked be
 And eke most honourable / in his degre 2856
 And at the last / he tok conclusiō
 That there as first / Arcite & Palamon

hadden for loue / the bataylle hem bytwene	
That in the selue Groue / swete & grene	2860
There as he had / his amorous desires	
Hys compleynt / and for loue his hote fires	
he wold make a fir / in which the office	
ffuneraH / he myght al accomplice	2864
And lete a-non comaunde / to hakke and hewe	
The Okes olde / and leyn hem on a rewe	
In culpons / wel arayed for to brenne	
¶  His officers / with swift fet they renne	2868
And ride a-non / at his comaundement	
And after this / Theseus hath I-sent	
After a Bere / and it al ouer-spredd	
with clothes of gold / the richest þat he hadde	2872
And of þe same seute / he clad Arcite	
vp-on his handes / his glowys whyte	
Eke on his hede / a corone of laurere grene	
And in his hand / a swerd ful bright and kene	2876
He leid him bare / the visage / on the bere	
Ther-with he wepte / that pite was to here	
And for the peeples / shuld sen him alle	
Whan it was day / he brouȝt him to þe halle	2880
That roreth of the cryng and the souñ	
Tho cam this wooful Theaban / Palamoñ	[leaf 36, back]
With flotry berd / and ruggy asshy heres	
In clothes blake / I-dropped al with teres	2884
And passyng othere / of wepyng / Emelye	
The reufullest / of al the cumpanye	
And in as meche / as the seruyse shuld be	
The more noble / and riche in his degree	2888
Duke Theseus / let forth the steedes bryng	
That trapped weren / in stele al gleteryng	
And couered with the Armes / of daun Arcite	
vp-on the steedes / grete and whyte	2892
There seten folk / of which on bar his shelde	
Another his spere / vp-on his hondes helde	

They bar with him / his bowe Turkeys
 Of brend gold was the caas / & eke the harneys 2896
 And riden forth a paas / with sorweful chere
 Toward the Groue / as ȝe schuln after here
 The noblest of the Grekys / that there were
 Vp-on here shuldres / carieden the bere 2900
 with slakke paas / and eyen rede and wete
 Thorough-ouȝt the Citee / by the maister strete
 That spred was al with blak / and wonder hȝe
 Ryȝht of the same / is the strete I-wrye 2904
 ¶ 𐀀 Vp-on the right hand / went old Egeus
 And on that other side / Duke Theseus
 With vesseles in here handes / of gold ful fyne
 Al ful of hony / melk / Blod / and wyne 2908
 Eke Palamoñ / with ful gret companye
 And after þat cam / wooful Emelye
 With fir in hand / as was þat tyme the gyse
 To do the offise / of ffuneraȝ seruyce 2912
 ¶ 𐀀 Heiȝh labour / and gret apparaillyng
 Was at the seruice / and the fir makyng
 That with his grene top / the heuene laught
 And xxⁱⁱ / fadome of brede / the armes straught 2916
 This is to seyn / the bowes were so brode
 Of stree first / there was leid mony a lode
 ¶ 𐀀 But how the fire / was maked vp on heiȝht
 Ne eke the names / how the trees heiȝht 2920
 As Oke fir / Birche / Aspe / Alder / holm / Popler Arbores
 Wylew / Elm / Plane / Assh / Box / Chesteyn / lynde / laurer
 Mapul / Thorn / Beche / Hasel / Ew / Whippeltre
 How they were feld / shal nat be told for me 2924
 ¶ 𐀀 Ne how the goddes / ronnen vp and down
 Disherited / of here habitacioñ [Dd. ends; leaf 87 gone]
 In which they woneden in rest and pees [Eg. begins, leaf 87
back]
 nymphes fawnes and madrides 2928
 Ne how the bestes and the briddes aȝ
 ffladden for ferde whan whan the wode was faȝ

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

Ne how the grounde agast was of the light
 That was nat wonte to seen the sonne bright 2932
 Ne how the fire was chaunged first *with* stre
 And then dry stykkes cloven in iij.
 And than *with* grene wode and spicery
 And than *with* cloth of golde and *with* perry 2936
 And garlandes hangyng full of many a flour
 The mirre Theceus *with* all the grete sauour
 Ne how Arcite lay amonge all this
 Ne what riches aboute his body ys 2940
 Ne how that Emelye as was the gyse
 put in the fire of funeraill seruice
 Ne how the swowned whan men made the fire
 ne what she spake ne what was hir desire 2944
 ne what Iewels men in the fire cast
 Whan that the fire was grete and brent faste
 Ne how som her sheldes and som her spere
 And of her vestimentes which that they were 2948
 And cuppes full of mylke and wyne and blode
 In-to the fire than brent as yt were wode
 And how the grekes *with* an houe route
 Thries ryden the fire aboute 2952
 Vp-on the left hande *with* a loude showtyng
 And thries *with* her speres clateryng
 And thries how the ladies gonnen crye
 And how that lad was homward Emelye 2956
 Ne how Arcite ys brent to asshen colde
 Ne how pat light wake was yholde
 All that night ne how the grekes pleye
 The wake plays ne kepe I nat to seye. 2960
 Who wrastelleth best naked *with* oyle enoynt
 Ne who that bare hym best in no disioynt [leaf 38]
 I wol nat tellen all how they gon
 Hom to Athenes whan the pleye ys don 2964
 But shortly to the poynte than wol I wende
 And maken of my longe tale an ende

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

By processe and by length of certain yeres
 Aȝ stynt is the mournyng and the teres 2968
 Of grekes by one generall assent
 Than semed me there was a parlement
 Among the which pointes spoken was 2972
 At Athenes vp-on certain poyntes and caas 2971
 To haue with certain encreas aliaunce
 And haue fully of Thebans obeisaunce
 ffor which this noble Theseus anon
 leten sende after gentell Palamon 2976
 Vnwyst of hym what was the cause and why
 But in his blake clothes sorowfully
 he cam at his comaundement in hie
 Tho sent Theseus for Emelye 2980
 Whan they were set and hussch was all the place
 And Theseus abyden hath a space
 Er only worde cam from his wyse brest
 His yeen set he there as was his list 2984
 And with a sad visage he sighed styll
 And after pat right thus he seide his will
The first mouer of the cause aboue
 whan he first made þe feir cheine of loue 2988
 Grete was theeffect and hie was his entent
 Wele wist he why and what there-of he ment
 ffor with pat feir chein of loue he bonde
 The fire the eyer the water and the londe 2992
 In certain bondes that they may nat fle
 That same prince and pat mover quod he
 hath stabliced in this wrecched world adoun
 Certain dayes and duracioun 2996
 To all that gendred is in this place
 Ouer the which day they may nat pace
 Aȝ mow they yit tho dayes a-brigge
 There nedeth none auctorite to alegge 3000
 ffor yt ys preued by experience /
 But pat me list declaren my sentence [leaf 88, back]

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Then men may wele by this ordre discerne
 That thilke mover stable ys and eterne 3004
 Wele may men knowe but it be a fole
 That euery part is dareined from his hole
 ffor nature hath nat taken his begynnyng
 Of no party or of canteil or of a thing 3008
 But of a thing that parfite is and stable
 Descendyng so tyll it be corumpable
 And therfore for his wyse purveyaunce
 He hath so wele byset his ordinaunce 3012
 That spices of thinges and progressions
 Sholden endure by successions
 And noght eterne withouten ony lye
 This maist pou vndrestonde and seyn at eye [Eg. ends] 3016
 Lo the Oke / that hath / so longe a norisshyng (Dd. begins,
 ffro the tyme / þat it first / bygynneth to spryng ¶ leaf 38) Nota bene
 And hath so longe a lyf / as 3e may se
 3et at the last / wasted is the tree 3020
 Considereth eke / how that the harde stoñ
 Vnder oure fote / on which we ride and gon
 It wasteth / as it lith / by the weye
 The brode ryuer / somtyme waxeth drye 3024
 The grete townes / se we wane and wend
 Than se 3e / þat al this thyng / hath an end
 Of man and womman / se we wel also
 That nedes in on / of þeise termes two 3028
 This is to seyn / in 3outhen or ellis in age
 he mot be ded / the kyng / as shal a page
 Som in his bed / som in the depe see
 Som in the large feld / as 3e moun se 3032
 There helpeth nouȝt / alle gon þat ilke wey
 Than may I seyn / that al this thyng mot dey
 ¶ (A) What makith this / but Iubiter the kyng
 That is prince and cause / of alle thyng 3036
 Conuertyng alle / vn-to his propre wylle
 ffrom which it is derreynd / soth to telle

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

And here a-geyns / no creature on lyue
 Of no degree / auayleth nat for to stryue 3040
 ¶ Than is it wysdom / as it thynketh me
 To maken vertue / of necessite
 And take it wele / þat we may nat escheue
 And namelich / þat to vs alle / is due 3044
 And who-so gruccheth ouȝt / he doth folie
 That rebel is to hym / þat al may gye
 And certeynly / a man hath most honour
 To dyen / in his excellence and flour 3048
 Whan he is syker / of his good name
 Than hath he don / his frend ne him no shame
 And gladdere ought his frend / ben of his deth
 Whan þat with honour / ȝolden is his breth 3052
 Than whan his name / appalled is for age
 ffor al forgetyn / is his vassillage
 Than is it best / as for a worthy fame
 To dyen / whan he is best of name 3056
 The contrary of al this / is wyfulnesse
 Why grucchen we / why haue we heynesse
 That good Arcite / of Chyualrie the flour
 Departed ys / with duete and honour 3060
 Oȝt of this foul prison / of this lyf
 Why grucchen heere / his Cosyn and his wyff [leaf 28, back]
 Of his welfare / that louen him so wele
 Can he hem thank / nay god wot / neuere a dele 3064
 That bothe his soule / and eke hem self offend
 And ȝet they moun / here lustes nat a-mend
 ¶ What may I concluden / of this long serie
 But after woo / I rede vs alle be merye 3068
 And thanken Iubiter / of al his grace
 And er we departen / from this place
 I rede we make / of sorwes two
 O parfyt Ioye / lastyng euere moo 3072
 And loketh now / where most sorwe is here-Inne
 There wyl I first amenden / and bygynne

¶ ♀ Suster quod he / this is my ful assent
 with alle the lordes here / of my parlement 3076
 Tat Ientil Palamoñ / 3oure owen knyght
 That serueth 3ow / with wyl hert & myght
 And euere hath don / syn first 3e him knewe
 That 3e schuln of 3our grace / vp-on him rewe 3080
 And taken him for husbonde / and for lord
 lene me 3oure hand / for þis is oure acord
 lat se now / of 3oure wommanly pitee
 he is a kyngis brotheres sone / parde 3084
 And though he were / a pore bachelere
 Syn he hath serued 3ow / so many a 3ere
 And had for 3ow / so gret aduersitee
 It must ben considered / leueth me 3088
 ffor gentil mercy / ou3t to passen right
 ¶ ♀ Than seide he thus / to Palamoñ the knyght
 I trowe there nedeth / lital sermonyng
 To maken 3ow assenten / to this thyng 3092
 Come nere / & taketh 3oure lady / by the hond
 Bytwixen hem / was mad a-non the bond
 That hight matrimoñ / or mariage
 By al the counseil / and the baronage 3096
 ¶ ♀ And thus with al blisse / and melodye
 hath Palamon I-wedded / Emelye
 And god þat al this world / hath wrought
 Sende him his loue / þat hath it dere a-bought 3100
 ffor now is Palamoñ / in aH wele
 leuyng in blisse / in richesse and in hele
 And Emelye / him loueth so tenderly
 And he hire serueth / so gentilly 3104
 That þere was / no word / hem bytwene
 Of ielousie / or ony other tene [leaf 39]
 Thus endeth Palamon / and Emelye 3107
 And god saue al / this fair companye.

¶ Amen quod Wytton :

¶ The prologe of the Millere

WHan that the knyght / had thus his tale I-told
 In al the companye / ne was þere ȝong ne old
 That he ne seide / it was a noble storie
 And worthy for to drawen / to memorie 3112
 And namely the gentiles / euerychoñ
 ¶ ♀ Oure Host lough / and swor as mot I goñ
 This goth a-right / vnboled is the male
 Lat se now / who shal telle / a-nother tale 3116
 ffor trewely / þis game is wel bygonne
 Now telleth ȝe sire Monke / if þat ȝe cone
 Som what / to quyte with / þe knyghtes tale
 ¶ ♀ The Millere / þat for-dronken was / of Ale^{al pale} 3120
 So þat vn-ethe vp-on his hors he sat
 he nolde a-valen / neither hod ne hat
 Ne a-byden no man / for his curteysie
 But in pilates vois / he gan to crye 3124
 And swor by armes / and by blod & bones
 I can a noble tale / for the nones
 With which I wol now / quyte þe knyghtes tale
 Oure host saw / that he was dronke of ale 3128
 And seide abyde / Robyn leue brother
 Som betir man / shal telle vs first a-nother
 A-byde / and late vs werkyn / thriftily
 By goddes soule quod he / that wol nat I 3132
 ffor I wol speke / or elles go my wey
 Oure host answered / telle on a dewel wey
 Thow art a fool / thy wyt is ouercome
 ¶ ♀ Now herkeneth quod the Millere / alle & some 3136
 But first I make / a protestacioñ
 That I am dronke / I knowe it be my soun
 And þerfore / if that I / mysspeke or sey
 Wyteth it the Ale / of Southwerk / I prey 3140

ffor I wol telle / a legend / or a lyf
 Bothe of a Carpenter / and of his wyf
 How þat a Clerk / hath set the wryghȝtes cap
 ¶ 𐝢 The Reve answered / and seide stynt thy clāp [cf. 30, bk.]
 late be thyn lewed / dronken Harlotrie 3145
 It is a synne / and eke a gret folie
 To a-peyren any man / of his defame
 And eke to brynge wyues / in swich name 3148
 Thow maist I-now / of othere thynges seyn
 ¶ 𐝢 This dronken Millere / spak ful sone a-geyn
 And seide / leue brother Oswold
 Who hath no wyf / he is no Cokewold 3152
 But I seye nat þerfore / that þou art on
 There ben ful goode wyues / many on
 [. [not in Eg. 2726]
 no gap in the MS.] 3156
 Why art þou angry / with my tale now
 I haue a wyf parde / as wel as thow
 ȝet nolde I / for the Oxen in my plough
 Taken vp-on me / more than I-nough 3160
 As demen on) my self / þat I were one
 I wol byleue wel / þat I am none
 An husbonde / shal nat ben inquesitif ¶ Nota bene
 Of goddes preuyte / ne of his wyf 3164
 So he may fynden / goddes foyson there
 Of the remenaunt / nedeth nat enquere
 ¶ 𐝢 What shulde I more seyn / but þis Millere
 he nolde hise wordes / for no man for-bere 3168
 But told his Cherles tale / in his manere
 Me a-thynketh / þat I shal / reherce it here
 And therefore / euery gentil wyghȝt I pray
 Demeth nat / for goddes loue / that I say 3172
 Of euele entent / but for I mot reherce
 here tales alle / al be they bet / or werce
 Or elles falsen / som) of my matere
 And þerfore / wo-so list it nat / to here 3176

Turne ouer the lef / and chese a-noper tale
 ffor he shal fynde I-nowe / grete & smale
 Of storial thyng / that toucheth gentilnesse
 And eke moralite / and holynesse 3180
 Blameth nat me / if þat 3e chese a-mys
 The Millere is a charl / 3e knowe wel this
 So was the Reve eke / and othere moo
 And Harlotrie they tolden / bothe two 3184
 A-vyseth 3ow / and put me ouȝt of blame
 And eke / men shuln nat make / ernest of game

¶ Heere bygynneth the Millers tale: [leaf 40]




Whilom there was dwellyng / in Ozenford
 A riche gnof / that gestes held to bord 3188
 And of his craft / he was a Carpenter
 with him pere was dwellyng / a poore scolere
 Had lerned art / but al his fantasye
 was turned / for to lerne / Astrologye 3192
 And koude a serteyn / of conclusions
 To demen / by interrogacions
 If þat men asked him / in certeyn houres
 What þat men shuld haue / drought or elles shoures 3196
 Or if men asked him / what shulde by-falle
 Of euery thyng / I may nat rekken hem alle
 ¶ This Clerk was cleped / hende Nicholas
 Of derne loue he coude / and of solas 3200
 And ther-to he was sly / and ful preue
 And like a Maide / meke for to se
 A Chaumbre had he / in that hostelrye
 A-lone / with-outen ony companye 3204
 fful fetisly dight / with herbes swote
 And he him self / as swete as is the rote
 Of licoris / or ony Setuale
 his Almageste / and bokes grete and smale 3208
 his Astralabie / longyng for his art
 His Augryme stones / loyn faire a-pert
 On shelues / kouched / at his beddis hede
 His presse couered / with a faldyng rede 3212
 And al a-boue / there lay a gay Sautrye
 On whiche he mad / on nyghtis melodye
 So swetely / þat al the chaumber rong
 And Angelus ad virginem / he song 3216
 And after that / he song the kynges note
 fful often blissed / was his mery throte

And thus this swete Clerk / his tyme spent
 After his frendis fyndyng / and his rent 3220
 ¶ This Carpenter had wedded / newe a wyf
 which þat he loued / more than his lyf
 Of xviij ȝere / she was of age
 Ielous he was / & held hire narwe in kage 3224
 ffor she was wylde / & ȝong / and he was old
 And demed him self / to ben like a Cokewold
 he knew nat Caton / for his wyt was rude
 That bad men shulde wedde / here similitude 3228
 Men shulde wedden / after here astate
 ffor ȝouth and age / is often at debate
 But sithe þat he / was fallen in the snare [leaf 40, back]
 he must endure / as other folk / his care 3232
 ¶ ffair was this ȝong wyf / and there-with-alle Nota
 As ony wesyl / hir body gent and smalle
 A Seynt she wered barred / al of sylke
 A barmclothe as whyte / as morwe mylke 3236
 vp-on hire lendes / ful of many a goore
 white was hire smokke / and browded al byfore
 And eke behynd / on hire coler a-boute
 Of cole blak sylk / with-Inne & eke with-oute 3240
 The tapes / of hire white volupere
 Were of þe same seute / of hire colere
 hire filet brod of sylk / and set ful hye
 And sekirly she hadde / a lykerous eye 3244
 fful smale I-pulled / were hire browes two
 And tho were bent / & blake as is a slo
 She was ful more blisful / on to se
 Than is the newe / Pere-Ionet tre 3248
 And softer þanne the wolle is / of a weder
 And by hire girdel heng / a purs of lether
 Tasseled with silk / and perled with latoun
 In al this world / to seken vp and down 3252
 There nys no man / so wys / þat coude thenche
 So gay a popelot / or swiche a wenche

fful brightere was the shynyng / of hire hewe
 Than in the Tour / the noble I-forged newe 3256
 But of hire song / it was as loude / and 3erne
 As ony swalwe / sitting on a berne
 Ther-to she coude skyp / and make game
 As ony kydde or calf / folwyng his dame 3260
 Hire mouth was swete / as braket or the meth
 Or hoord of apples / leyd in hey or heth
 Wynsyng she was / as is a ioly colt
 long as a mast / and vp-right as a bolt 3264
 A broche she bar / vp-on hire lowe coler
 As brod / as is the boos / of a bokeler
 hire shoes were laced / on hire legges heye
 She was a prymerole / a Pyggesnye 3268
 ffor any lord / to leggen in his bedde
 Or 3et / for ony good 3emman / to wedde
 ¶ Now sire and eft sire / so byfel the cas
 That on a day / þis hende Nicholas 3272
 ffel with þis 3ong wyf / to rage and pleye
 While that hire husbond / was at Osneye
 As clerkis ben ful sotil / and ful queynt
 And preuily / he caught hire / by the queynt [leaf 41] 3276
 And seide I-wysse / but ich haue my wylle
 ffor derne loue / of the lemman / I spille
 And held hire harde / by the haunche bones
 And seide lemman / loue me al at ones 3280
 Or I wol deyen / also god me saue
 And she sprong / as a colt doth in a traue
 And with hire hed / she wryed fast a-vey
 She seyde / I wol nat kysse the / be my fey 3284
 We lat be quod ich / lat be Nicholas
 Or I wol crie / ouȝt herrowe / and allas
 Do wey 3oure handes / for 3oure curteisie
 ¶ This Nicholas / gan mercy for to crye 3288
 And spak so faire / and profred him so faste
 That she hire loue / hym graunted at the laste

And swor hire oth / by seynt Thomas of Kent
 That she wolde ben / at his comaundement 3292
 whan þat she may / hire leiser wel a-spie
 Myn husbond is / so ful of Ielusye
 That but 3e wayte wel / and be preue
 I wot right wel / I nam but ded quod she 3296
 3e must be ful derne / as in this cas
 ¶ Nay ther-of care the nought / quod Nicholas
 A Clerk had litherly / byset his whyle
 But if he coude / a Carpenter begyle 3300
 And thus they ben / acorded / and I-sworn
 To wayte a tyme / as I haue told byforñ
 ¶ whan Nicholas had don this / euery dele *Nota bene*
 And thakkede hire / a-boute the lendes wele 3304
 he kisseth hire swete / and taketh his sautrie
 And pleyeth faste / and maketh melodye
 ¶ Thanne fel it thus / þat to the Parissch Chirche
 Cristes owen werk / for to werche 3308
 This good wyf went / on an haliday
 hire forhede shon / as bright as ony day
 So was it wasshen / whan she lete hir werk
 ¶ Now was there of þat chirche / a parissch clerk 3312
 The which / þat was I-cleped / Absolon
 Crool was his heer / & as the gold it shon
 And strotted as a fanne / large and brode
 fful streyt and euene / lay his ioly shode 3316
 his rode was rede / his eyen grey as goos
 with Potles wyndowes / coruen on hise shoos
 In Hosen rede / he went ful fetislye [*leaf 41, back*]
 I-clad he was / ful smal and proprelye 3320
 Al in a kirtil / of a light vaget
 fful fair & thikke / ben the poyntis set
 And ther-vp-on / he had a gay surplice
 As white as is / the blosme on the rice 3324
 A mery child he was / so god me saue
 wel coude he laten blod / & clippe and shaue

And make a charter of lond / or acquietance
 In xxth maners / coude he tryppe and daunce 3328
 After the scole / of Oxenford tho
 And with hise leggis / casten to and fro
 And pleyen song / on a smal ribible
 Ther-to he song som tyme / a loude quynnyble 3332
 And as wel coude he pley / on a geterne
 In al the Toun nas there / brewhous ne Tauerne
 That he ne vesited / with his solace
 There ony gaylard / tapstere was 3336
 But sothe to seyn / he was somdele squeymous
 Of fartyng / and of speche daungerous
 This Absolon / that ioly was and gay
 Goth with a Censer / on the haliday 3340
 Sensyng the wyues / of the Pariss^h fast
 And many a louely loke / on hem he cast
 And namely / on this Carpenteres wyf
 To loke on hire / him þought a mery lif 3344
 She was so propre / and swete / and likerous
 I dar wel seyn / if she had ben a Mous
 And he a kat / he wold hire hent a-non
 This pariss^h Clerk / this ioly Absolon 3348
 hath in his hert / swich a lous longyng
 That of no wyf / toke he non offryng
 ffor curteisie he seide / he wold non
 The Mone / whan it was nyght / ful bright shon 3352
 And Absolon / his gyterne / hath I-take
 ffor paramours he þought / for to wake
 And forth he goth / Iolyf and amorous
 Til he cam / to the Carpenters hous 3356
 A litel after Cokkes / had I-crowe
 And dressed him vp / by a shot wyndowe
 That was vp-on / the Carpenteres wal
 he syngeth in his voys / gentil and smal 3360
 Now dere lady / if thy wyl be
 I pray 3ow / þat 3e wol / rewe on me

fful wel accordyng / to his gitternyng
 ¶  This Carpenter a-woke / and herd him syng ^[leaf 42]
 And spak vn-to his wyf / and seide a-non 3335
 What Alison / herest þou nat Absolon
 That chaunteth thus / vnder oure boures walle
 And she answered hire husbond / there-with-alle 3368
 3is god wot Ioþin / I here it euery dele
 This passeth forth / what wyl 3e bet than wele
 ffor day to day / this Ioly Absolon
 So wougheth hire / that him is woo-bygon 3372
 he waketh al the nyght / and al the day
 he kembeth hise lokkes brode / & mad him gay
 he wougheth hire by menes / and brocage
 And swor he wolde ben / hire owen page 3376
 he syngeth brokkyng / as a Nyghtyngale
 And sent hire pyment / Meth & spiced ale
 And waferes pypyng hote / ouzt of the glede
 And for she was of Toune / he profred mede 3380
 ffor somme folk / wol be wommen for richesse
 And somme for strokes / and somme for gentilnesse¹
 Somtyme to shewen / his lightnesse and maistrye
 he pleyeth heraudes / vp-on a skaffold heye 3384
 ¶  But what-availleth him / as in this cas ^{1 ¶ Vnde Ouidius /}
 She loueth so / this hende Nicholas ^{Ictibus Agrestis}
 That Absolon may blowe / the bukkes horn
 he ne had for his labour / but a skorn 3388
 And thus she maketh / Absolon hire Ape
 And al his earnest / turneth to a Iape
 fful soth is this prouerbe / it is no lye
 Men sayn right thus / alwey the nye slye 3392
 Maketh the fer leef / to be loth
 ffor though þat Absolon / be wood or wroth
 By-cause þat he fer wes / from hire sight
 This nye Nicholas / stod in his light 3396
 ¶  Now bere the wel / thow hende Nicholas
 ffor Absolon may waylle / and synge allas


And so byfel it / that on a Saturday
 This Carpenter / was gone to Osney 3400
 And hende Nicholas / and Alison
 Accorded ben / to this conclusiō
 That Nicholas / shal shapen hem a wyle
 The sely Ielous husbonde / to begyle 3404
 And if so be / the game went a-right
 She shulde slepe / in his arme al nyght [leaf 42, back]
 Sffor this was hire desir / and his also
 And right a-non / with-oute wordes moo 3408
 This Nicholas / no lengere wold tarie
 But doth ful softe / vn-to his chaumbre carie
 Bothe mete and drynk / for a day or twey
 And to hire husbonde / bad hire for to sey 3412
 If that he axed / after Nicholas
 She shulde seye / she nyst where he was
 Of al that day / she sey him nat with eye
 She trowed þat he was / in sum maladye 3416
 ffor · for no cry / hire mayde koude him calle ¶ quia · pro ·
 he nolde answer / for thyng þat myght falle
 This passeth forth / al thilk Satirday
 That Nicholas stille / in his chaumbre lay 3420
 And ete and slepe / or dede what him list
 Til Sondag / that þe sonne goth to rest
 ¶ ① This sely Carpenter / hath gret merueylle
 Of Nicholas / or what thyng myght him eylle 3424
 And seide / I am a-drad / by seynt Thomas
 It stondeth nat a right / with Nicholas
 God shilde / þat he deyed sodeynly
 This world is now / ful tekil sekerly 3428
 I saw to-day / a cors I-born to chirche
 That now on monday last / I saw him werche
 Go vp quod he / vn-to his knaue a-non
 Clepe at the dore / and knokke with a ston 3432
 loke how it is / and telle me boldely
 ¶ ① This knaue goth him vp / ful sturdily

And at the chaumbre dore / while þat he stode
 he cryed and knocked / as he were wode 3436
 what how / what do ȝe / Maister Nicholay
 how may ȝe slepen / al the long day
 But al for nouȝt / he seide nat a worde
 An hole he fond / ful lowe vp-on the borde 3440
 There as the Cat / was wont / In / for to crepe
 And at that hole / he loked In / ful depe
 And at the last / he had of him a sight
 This Nicholas sat euere / gapyng vp-right 3444
 As he had loked / on the newe Mone
 A-doun he goth / and telleth his maister sone
 In what array / he saugh this ilke man
 ¶ This Carpenter / to blissen him / bygan 3448
 And seide / helpe vs / seynt ffredeswyde
 A man wot litel / what hym shal betyde [leaf 45]
 This man is fallen / with his Astronome
 In som woodnesse / or in som Agonye 3452
 I thought ay wele / how that it shulde be
 Men shuld nat knowe / of goddis preuyte
 ȝa blissed be alwey / a lewed man
 That nought but only / his byleue can 3456
 So ferde a-nother clerk / with his Astronome
 he walked in the feldes / for to pryde
 Vp-on the sterres / what there shuld byfalle
 Til þat he / in a marle pyt / was falle 3460
 he saw nat that / but ȝet be Seynt Thomas
 Me reweth sore / of hende Nicholas
 he shal be ratid / of his studyng
 If þat I may / be Ihesus heuene kyng 3464
 Get me a staf / that I may vnder pore
 while þat þow Robyn / heuest of the dore
 he shal ouȝt of his studyng / as I gesse
 And to the chaumbre dore / he gan him dresse 3468
 his knaue was a strong Carl / for the nones
 And by the haspe / he haf it of at ones

In to the flore / the dore fel a-non
 This Nicholas sat ay as stille / as ony ston 3472
 And euere he gaped vpward / in-to the Eyre
 This Carpenter wende / he were in dispeyre
 And hent him / by the shuldres / myghtyly
 And shoke him harde / and cried spetously 3476
 what Nicholay / what how / loke a-doun
 A-wake / and thynk on cristes passion
 I crouche the from Elues / and fro wyghtes
 There-with the nyght spel / seide he a-non rightes 3480
 On foure halues / of the hous a-boute
 And on the thressewold / at the dore withoute
 Ihesu crist / and seynt Benedyght
 Blisse this hous / fro euery euyl wyght 3484
 ffor the nyghtsmare / the whyzt Pater noster
 Where wonest thou / seynt Petres suster
 ¶ And at the last / this hende Nicholas
 Gan for to sighe sore / and seide allas 3488
 Shal al the world / be lost eftsones now
 This Carpenter answered / what seist þou
 what thynk on god / as we don men þat swynke
 ¶ This Nicholas answered / fecche me a drynke 3492
 And after wol I speke / in preuyte
 Of thyng þat toucheth / the and me
 I wyl telle it non other man / certeyn [leaf 48, back]
 This Carpenter goth down / and cometh a-geyn 3496
 And brought of myghty ale / a large quart
 And whanne þat ech of hem / had dronken his part
 This Nicholas / his dore faste shette
 And doun the Carpenter / by him he sette 3500
 And seide Iohn myn host / lef and dere
 Thou shalt vp-on thy treuthe / swere me heere
 That to no wyght / þou shalt my counseil wreye
 ffor it is cristes counseil / þat I seye 3504
 And if þou telle ony man / þou art for-lore
 ffor this vengeance / thou shalt haue þerfore

That if þou wreye me / thow shalt be wode
 Nay / criste for-bede it / for his holy blode 3508
 Quod tho this sely man / I am non labbe
 Ne though I sey it / I nam nat lief to gabbe
 Sey what þou wyle / I shal it neuere telle
 To child ne wyf / by him þat harwed helle 3512
 ¶ Now Iohn quod this Nicholas / I wol nat lye
 I haue founden / in myn Astrologye
 As I haue loked / in the Mone bright
 That now on monday next / at quarter nyght 3516
 Shalt fallen a reyn / and that so wylde & wood
 That half so gret / was neuere Noes flod
 This world he seide / in lesse than an houre
 Shal be dreynt / so hydous is the shoure 3520
 Thus shal mankynde / drenche / & lese here lif
 This Carpenter answered / allas my wyf
 And shal she drenche / allas myn Alisoun
 ffor sorwe of this / he fel almost a-doun 3524
 And seide / is there no remedye in this cas
 We ȝis for gode / quod hende Nicholas
 If þou wilt werken / after lore and rede
 Thow maist nat werken / after þin owen hede 3528
 ffor thus seith Salamon / þat was ful trewe
 werk al by counseyl / and þow shalt nat rewe
 And if thow werken wolt / by good counsaylle
 I vndertake / with-uten mast or saylle 3532
 Ȝet shal I saue hire / and the and me
 hast þou nat herd / how saued was Noe
 whanne þat oure lord / had warned him biforū
 That al the world / with water shuld be lorū 3536
 ¶ Ȝis quod this Carpentere / ful ȝore a-go
 hast þou nat herd / quod Nicholas also
 The sorwe of Noe / with his felaweshipe
 Er that he myght gete / his wyf to shipe [leaf 44] 3540
 hym had be leuere / I dar wel vndertake
 At thilk tyme / than alle hise wetheres blake

That she had had / a ship hire-self a-lone
 And þerfore wost þou what / is best to done 3544
 This asketh hast / and of an hasty thyng
 Men moun nat preche / and maken taryng
 A-non go gete vs fattes / in-to this Inne
 A knedyng trow / or ellis a kamelyne 3548
 ffor ech of vs / but loke þat they be large
 In whiche we moun swymme / as in a barge
 And haue þere-Inne / vetaille sufficient
 But for o day / fy on the remenaunt 3552
 The water shal a-slake / and gon a-vey
 A-boute pryme / vp-on the next day
 But Robyn may nat wyte of this / thy knaue
 Ne eke thy mayde Gille / I may nat saue 3556
 Aske nat why / for though þou axe me
 I wol nat telle / goddis preuyte
 Suffiseth the / but if thyne wyttes madde
 To han as gret a grace / as Noe hadde 3560
 Thy wyf shal I wel sauen / ouȝt of doute
 Go now thy way / and spede the here a-boute
 But when þou hast / for hire and the and me
 I-geeten vs / theise knedyng tubbes thre 3564
 Thanne shalt þou hangen hem / in the roof ful heye
 That noman / of oure purueance / espie
 And whan þow hast doñ / as I haue seid
 And hast oure vetaille / faire in hem leyd 3568
 And eke an ax / to smyte the cord a-two
 Whan þat the water cometh / þat we may go
 And breke an hole an hey / vp-on the gable
 Vn-to the gardeyn ward / ouer the stable 3572
 That we moun freely passen / forth oure way
 whanne þat the grete shour / is gon a-vey
 Thanne shalt þou swymme / as mery I vndertake
 As doth the white doke / after hire drake 3576
 Than wyl I clepe / how Alison / how Iohn
 Be mery / for the flode / shal passe a-non

And þou wolt seyn / heyl Maister Nicholay
 Good morwe / I se the wele / for it is day 3580
 And þanne shuln we / be lordes all oure lyf
 Of al the world / as Noe and his wyf
 But of o thyng / I warne the ful right [leaf 44, back]
 Be we a-vysed / on that ilke nyght 3584
 That we ben entred / in-to shippes bord
 That non of vs / speke nat a word
 Ne clepe ne crie / but ben in his prayere
 ffor it is / goddis / owen heste dere 3588
 Thy wyf and thou / mot hange fer a-twynne
 ffor that betwixe 3ow / shal be no synne
 No more in loking / than there shal in dede
 This ordynance is seid / so god the spede 3592
 To-morwe at nyght / when men ben alle a-slepe
 In-to our kneding tubbes / wol we crepe
 And sitten there / a-bidyng goddis grace
 Go now thy wey / I haue no lengere space 3596
 To maken of this / no lengere sermonynge
 Men seyn thus / sende the wyse / & sey no thynges¹
 Thou art so wys / it nedeth the nought to teche 3599
 Go saue oure lyf / and that I the byseche ^{1 ¶ Mitte sapientem &c!}
 ¶  This sely Carpenter / goth forth his wey
 ful ofte he seide / allas and wellawey
 And to his wyf / he told his preuyte
 And she was war / and knewe it bet than he 3604
 what al þis queynt cas / was for to sey
 But natheles / she ferd as she wold dey
 And seide allas / go forth thy weye a-non
 help vs to skape / or we ben ded ichon 3608
 I am thy trewe / verray wedded wyf
 Go dere spouse / and help to saue oure lyf
 lo whiche a gret thyng / is affeccioñ ¶ Auctor
 Men moun deyen / of ymaginacioñ 3612
 So depe / may impressioñ be take
 This sely Carpenter / begynneth quake

hym thynketh verraylich / that he may se
 Noes floode / come walwyng as the see 3616
 To drenchen Alison / his hony dere
 he wepeth wailleth / and maketh sory chere
 he sigheth / with ful many a sory swough
 And goth & getith him / a knedyng trow 3620
 And after a tubbe / and a kemelyn
 And preuily he sent hem / to his In
 And heng hem in the roof / in preuytee
 his owen hand / he made laddres thre 3624
 To clymben by the roumes / and the stalkes
 Vn-to the Tubbes / hanggyng in the balkes
 And hem vetailled / bothe kemelyn trow and Tubbe 3627
 With bred and chese / and good ale in a Iubbe [leaf 45]
 Suffisyng right I-now / as for a day
 But er that he / had mad al this array
 he sent his knaue / and eke his wenche also
 vp-on his nede / to london for to go 3632
 And on the monday / whan it drow to nyght
 he shette his dore / with-uten candel light
 And dressyd al thyng / as it shulde be
 And shortly vp they clymben alle thre 3636
 They setyn stille / wel a forlong wey
 Now pater noster / clum seide Nicholay
 And clum quod Iohn / and clum seide Alison
 This Carpenter / seide his deuocioñ 3640
 And stille he syt / and biddeth his prayere
 A-waytyng on the reyn / if he it here
 The dede slepe / for verrey besynesse
 ffel on this Carpenter / right as I gesse 3644
 A-boute curfewe tyme / or litel more
 ffor trauaille of his gest / he groneth sore
 And eft he routeth / for his hede myslay
 Down on the laddre / stalketh Nicholay 3648
 And Alison ful soft / adoun she spedde
 With-oute wordes mo / they gon to bedde

There as this Carpenter / is wont to lye
 There was the reuel / and the melodye 3652
 And thus lyn Alisoñ / and Nicholas
 In besynesse of myrthe / and in solas
 Til that the belle / of laudes gan to rynge
 And freres in the chaunsel / goñ synge 3656
 ¶ This parisshe Clerk / this ameraus Absoloñ
 That is for loue / alwey so woo-bygoñ
 vp-on the monday / was at Osneye
 with companye / him to disporte and pleye 3660
 And axed vp-on cas / a cloisterere
 fful preuily / after Iohñ the Carpenter
 And he drough him a-pert / ouzt of the chirche
 And seide I not / I saugh him here nat werche 3664
 Sithe Satirday / I trow þat he be went
 ffor tymber / there oure Abbot hath him sent
 ffor he is wont / for tymber for to go
 And dwellyn at the Graunge / a day or two 3668
 Or ellis he is / at his hous certeyn
 where that he be / I kan nat sothely seyn
 ¶ This Absoloñ / ful Ioly was and light
 And thouzt now is tyme / to wake al nyght 3672
 And sekirly / I saugh him nat steryng [leaf 45, back]
 Aboute his dore / sen day began to spring
 So mot I thryue / I shal at Cokkes crowe
 fful preuly knokken / at his wyndowe 3676
 That stant ful lowe / vp-on his boures walle
 To Alisoñ now / wol I tellen alle
 My loue longyng for zet / I shal nat mysse
 That at the leste weye / I shal hire kysse 3680
 Som maner comfort / shal I haue parfay
 My mouth hath yched / al this long day
 This is a signe / of kyssyng at the lest
 Al nyght me mette eke / þat I was at a fest 3684
 Therefore I wyl go slepe / an houre or twey
 And al the nyght þanne / wol I wake & pley

¶ ♪ Whan that the first kok / hath crow a-non)
 Vp risith this Ioly lounyere / Absolon) 3688
 And him arrayeth gay / at poynt deuys
 But first he cheweth / Greynes & lycoris
 To smellen swete / er he had kembed his heer
 Vnder his tonge / a treweloue he ber ¶ Nota 3692
 ffor ther-by wend he / to be gracious
 he rometh / to the Carpenteres hous
 And stille he stant / vnder the shot wyndowe
 Vn-to his brest it raught / it was so lowe 3696
 And softe he koughed / *with* a semy soun)
 What do 3e honycombe / swete Alison
 My fair brede / my swete Cinamome
 A-waketh lemman myn / and speketh to me 3700
 Wol litel thenke 3e / vp-on my woo
 That for 3oure loue / I swete there I go
 No wonder is / though þat I swelt and swete
 I morne as doth a lambe / after the tete 3704
 I-wysse lemman / I haue swich loue longyng
 That like a Turtill trewe / is my murnyng
 I may nat ete / no more than a mayde
 ¶ ♪ Go fro the wyndowe / Iakke fool she seyde 3708
 As help me god / it wol nat be compame
 I loue a-nother / and ellis I were to blame
 wel bet than the / by Ihesu Absolon
 Go forth thy way / or I wol cast a stoñ 3712
 And lete me slepe / a twenty deuel wey
 Allas quod Absolon / and weyllawey
 That trewloue was / euere / so yuel bysette
 Than kisse me / sithe it may be no bette 3716
 ffor Ihesus loue / and for the loue of me
 Wylt thou thanne go thy way / ther-with quod she [leaf 46]
 3a certis lemman / quod this Absolon
 Than make the redy quod she / I come a-non) 3720
 [.
 *no gap in the MS.*]
 This Absolon doun sette him / on his knees

And seyde / I am a lord / at alle degrees 3724
 ffor after this / I hope there cometh more
 Lemman thy grace / and swete brede thyn ore
 The wyndowe she vn-doth / and that in hast
 Haue I-don quod she / come of & spede the fast 3728
 leste that oure neyghebores / the espie
 This Alison gan wye / his mouth ful drye
 Derke was the nyght / as pych or as the cole
 And at the wyndowe / ouȝt she put hire hole 3732
 And Absolon him fel / neither bet ne wers
 But with his mouth / he kiste hire naked ers ¶ Nota quid
 fful sauerly / er he were war of this malum
 A-bak he stirte / and pouȝt it was a-mys 3736
 ffor wele he wyst / a womman had no berd
 he felt a thyng al row / and longe I-hered
 And seide fy allas / what haue I do
 ¶ ♀ Te he quod she / and clapped the wyndowe to 3740
 And Absolon goth forth / a sory pace
 A berd a berd / seide hende Nicholas
 By goddes corpus / this goth fair & wele
 This sely Absolon / herd euerydele 3744
 And on his lyppe / for anger he gan to byte
 And to him self he seide / I shal the quyte
 ¶ ♀ Who rubbeth now / who froteth now hise lippes
 With dust / with sond / with strawe / with cloth / with chippes
 But Absolon that seith / ful ofte allas 3749
 My soule be-take I / vn-to Satanas
 But me were leuere / than al this toun quod he
 Of this dispyt / a-wreken for to be 3752
 Allas quod he / allas I ne hadde I-blent
 his hote loue was cold / and al I-queynt
 ffor fro þat tyme / that he had kist hire ers
 Of paramours / ne rouȝt he nat a kers 3756
 ffor he was heled / of his maladye
 fful ofte paramours / he gan defye
 And wepe / as doth a child / þat is I-beta
 A soft pas he went him / ouer the strete 3760

Vn-to a smyth / men callen daun Gerueys
 That in his forge / smethed plough harneys
 he sharpeth shaare / and cultur besily
 This Absolon / knokketh / al esily 3764
 And seide / vn-do Gerueys / and that a-non [leaf 46, back]
 What who art þow / it am I Absolon
 What Absolon / what cristes swete tre
 Why ryse 3e so rathe / ey benedicite 3768
 What eyleth 3ow / some gay gerle god it wote
 hath brought 3ow thus / vp-on the veritote
 By seynt Note / 3e wot wel what I mene
 This Absolon / ne rouȝt nat a bene 3772
 Of al his pley / no word a-geyn he 3af
 he had more thought / on his distaf
 Than Gerueys knew / and seide frend so dere
 That hote culter / in the chemyny here 3776
 As lene it me / I haue there-with to done
 I wol bryng it the / a-geyn / ful sone
 Gerueys answered / certes were it gold
 Or in a poke / nobles al vn-told 3780
 Thow shuldest haue / as I am trewe smyth
 Ey cristes foo / what wol 3e do ther-wyth
 There-of quod Absolon / be as be may
 I shal wel telle it the / a-nother day 3784
 And cauth the cultur / by the hote stele
 fful softe ouȝt at the dore / he gan to stele
 And went vn-to / the Carpenteres wal
 he kougheth first / & knokketh ther-with-al 3788
 vp-on the wyndowe / right as he dede ere
 This Alison answered / who is there
 That knokketh so / I warant it is a thefe
 Nay nay quod he / god wot my swete lefe 3792
 I am thyn Absolon / thy derlyng
 Of gold quod he / I haue the brouȝt a ryng
 My moder 3af it me / so god me saue
 fful ffyne it is / and ther-to wel I-graue 3796

This wol I ȝeue the / if thow me kysse
 ¶ This Nicholas / was risen vp / to pyssse
 He thought he wolde amende / al the lape
 he shulde kysse hise ars / er that he skape 3800
 And vp the wyndowe / he dide hastily
 And ouȝt his ers / he putteth preuily
 Ouer the buttoke / to the haunche bon
 And ther-with spak this Clerk / this Absolon 3804
 Speke swete brede / I not where thow art
 ¶ This Nicholas a-non / let flee a fart
 As gret as it had ben / a thonder dynt
 That with the stroke / he was almost I-blynt 3808
 And he was redy / with his Iren hote [leaf 47]
 And Nicholas / in the ars he smote
 Of goth the skyn / an hanbrede a-boute
 The hote cultur / brent so his toute 3812
 That for the smert / he wend for to dye
 As he were wode / for woo he gan to crye
 help / water water / help for goddes hert
 ¶ This Carpenter / ouȝt of his slomer start/ 3816
 And herd on crye water / as he were wode
 And seide allas / now cometh Noes flode
 he sette him vp / with-oute wordes moo
 And with his ax / he smote the corde a-two 3820
 And doun goth al / he fond neither to selle
 Brede ne Ale / tyl he cam to the Celle
 vp-on the flor / and there a swouȝne he lay
 Vp stirt hire Alison / and Nicholay 3824
 And crieden ouȝt / and herrowe / in the strete
 The neyghebores / bothe smale and grete
 In ronnen / for to gawren / on this man
 That in swownyng lay / bothe pale and wan 3828
 ffor with the fal / he broken had his arme
 But stonde he must / vn-to his owen harme
 ffor whan he spak / he was a-non born douȝ
 With hende Nicholas / and Alisoun 3832

They tolden euery man / that he was wode
 he was so a-gast / of Noes flode
 Thorough fantasye / that of his vanyte
 he had brought him / knedyng tubbes thre 3836
 And had hem hanged / in the rof a-boue
 And that he preyed hem / for goddes loue
 To sitten in the rof / par companye
 The folk gonne laughen / at his fantasye 3840
 In-to the rof / they kekyn and they gape
 And turned al his harm / vn-to a lape
 ffor what so / þat this Carpenter / answered
 It was for nought / no man his resoñ hered 3844
 with othes grete / he was so sworn a-douñ
 That he was holden wod / in al the touñ
 ffor euery clerk / a-non right / held with other
 And seiden / the man was wod / my lef brother 3848
 And euery wyght gan laughen / of this striffe
 Thus swyued was / the Carpenteres wyffe
 ffor al his keypyng / and his Ielousye
 And Absoloñ / hath kyssed / hire nether eye 3852
 And Nicholas is skalded / in the toute
 This tale is don / and god saue al the routh : quod Wytton :

Thus endeth the Millers tale / [leaf 47, back]

[No break in the MS.]

[on leaf 47, back] & bygynneth the prologe of the Reve

WHanne folk han laughen / at þis nyce cas
 Of Absolon / and hende Nicholas 3856
 Dyuerse folk / diuersly they seyde
 But for the more part / they loughe & pleyde
 Ne at this tale / I saw no man him greue
 But it were oonly / Oswold the Reue 3860
 By-cause he was / of Carpenteres craft
 A litel Ire / is / in his hert laft
 he gan to grocche / and blamed it a lyte
 So thiike quod he / ful wel coude I the quyte 3864
 with bleryng / of a proude Milleres eye
 If þat me list / to speke of rybaudye
 But ik am old / me list nat pleye for age
 Gras tyme is doñ / my foder is now forage 3868
 This white toþ / wryteth myne olde 3eres
 Myn hert is also / mouled / as myne heeres
 But if I fare / as doth an open ars
 That ilke fruyt / is euere lengere the wers 3872
 Til it be roten / in mullok or in stree
 We olde men / I drede / so fare we
 Til we be roten / kan we nat be rype
 We hope alwey / while þat the world wol pipe 3876
 ffor in oure wyl / there steketh euere a nayl
 To han an hore heer / and a grene tayl
 As hath a leek / for though oure myght be gon
 Oure wyl / desireth folye / euere in on 3880
 ffor whanne we moun nat don / than wol we speke
 3et in our asschen old / ys fire I-reke
 ffoure gledes han we / which I shal deuysel
 Auauntyng / lying / Angyr / Coueytise ¶ Nota bene 3884
 Theise foure sparcles / longen vn-to elde
 Our olde lymes / moun wel ben vn-welde



But wyl ne shal faylen / that is soth
 And ȝet haue ik alwey / a coltyssh toth 3888
 As many a ȝere / as it is passed henne
 Sithe that my tappe / of lyf / bygan to reane
 ffor sekirly / whan yk was born / anon
 Deth drough the tapp of lyf / and let it go 3892
 And euere sithe / hathe so / the tappe I-ronne
 Til that almost / al empty is the tonne
 The streme of lyf / now droppeth on the chyme
 The sely tonge / may wel ryng & chymbe 3896
 Of wrecchednesse / that passed is ful ȝore
 With olde folk / saue / dotage is na more
 ¶ ¶ Whan þat our host / had herd this sermonyng
 he gan to speke / as lordly as a kynge 3900
 And seide what amounteth al this wyt [leaf 48]
 Why shuln we al day / speke of holy wryt
 The deuile mad a Reue / for to preche
 Or a Soutere / a shipman / or a leche 3904
 Sey forth thy tale / and tary nat the tyme
 lo Depforde / and it is half weye pryme
 lo Grenewyche / there many a shrewe is Inne
 It were al tyme / thy tale to bygynne 3908
 Now Sires / quod this Oswold the Reue
 I prey ȝow alle / that ȝe nat ȝow greue
 Though I answere / and somdel sette his howe
 ffor leueful is / with force / force of showe 3912
 This dronken Millere / hath told vs here
 how that begyled was / a Carpenter
 Parauenture in skorne / for I am one
 And by ȝoure leue / I shal him quyte anone 3916
 Ryght in his cherles termes / wol I speke
 I preye to god / his nekke mot to-breke
 he can wel in myn eye / sen a stalke
 But in his owen / he can nat sen a balke 3920

¶ Heere bigynneth the Reues Tale :

At Trompyngton / nat fer fro Caumbrygge
 There goth a broke / and ouer that a brygge
 vp-on the whiche broke / there stant a Mille
 And this is verray soth / that I ȝow telle 3924
 A Millere was there / dwellyng many a day
 As any Pecok / he was proud and gay
 Pipe he coude and fissue / and nettes bete
 And turne cuppes / & wel wrestel and shete 3928
 Ay by his belt / he bar a long panade
 And of a sword / ful trenchaunt was the blade
 A Ioly poppere bar he / in his pouche
 There was no man for paril durst him touche 3932
 A Shefeld whitel / bar he in his hose
 Round was his face / & kamuse was his nose
 As pilled as an Ape / was his skulle
 he was a markete betere / at the fulle 3936
 There durst no wyght / hand vp-on him legge
 That he ne swor / he shulde a-non a-begge
 A thef he was / forsothe / of corn & mele
 And that a slye / and vsand for to stele 3940
 his name was hoten / deignous Symkyn
 A wyf he hadde / comyn of noble kyn
 The parson of the touz / hire fader was
 With hire he ȝaf / ful many a panne of bras [leaf 48, back] 3944
 ffor that Symkyn / shulde in his blod a-lye
 She was I-fostred / in a Nonnerye
 ffor Symkyn nolde no wyf / as he said
 But she were wel norisshe / and a mayd 3948
 To sauen his estate / of ȝemanrye
 And she was proud / and pert as a pye
 A ful fair sight / was it vp-on hem two
 .On halidayes biforñ hire / wold he go 3952

with his typet wounde / a-boute his hede
 And she cam after / in a gyte of rede
 And Symkyn had hosen / of the same
 There durst no wyght / clepen hire but dame 3956
 was no so hardy / that went by the weye
 That with hire durst rage / or ellis pleye
 But if he wolde be slayn / of Symkyn
 with panade / or with knyf / or boydekyn 3960
 ffor ielous folk / ben perilous euere mo
 Algate they wold / here wyues wend so
 And eke for she was / somdel smoterlich
 She was as deigne / as water in a dich 3964
 So ful of hoker / and of bysmare
 Hire pouȝt that a lady / shuld hire spare
 what for hire kynrede / and hire norturye
 That she had lerned / in the Nonnerye 3968
 ¶ A doughter had they / bytwix hem two
 Of twenty ȝere / with-outen ony mo
 Sauyng a child / þat was of half ȝere age
 In cradel it lay / and was a propre page 3972
 This wenche thikke / & wel I-grown was
 with camuse nose / and eyen greye as glas
 with bottokes brode / and brestes rounde & heyne
 But right fair was hire her / I wol nat lye 3976
 ¶ The Parson of the toun / for she was fair
 In purpose was / to maken hire his eyr
 Bothe of his catel / and his mesuage
 And straunge he mad it / of hire mariage 3980
 his purpos was / for to bystowen hire heyne
 In-to som worthy blode / of Auncetrye
 ffor holy chirche good / mot ben dispended
 On holy chirche blod / that is descended 3984
 Therefore he wolde / his holy blod honoure
 Though þat he / holy chirche / shuld deuoure
 ¶ Gret soken had this Millere / out of doute
 with whete / and malt / of al the lond a-boute 3988

And namelich there was / a gret College [leaf 40]
 Men clepen the Soler halle / of Caumbrygge
 There was here whete / & eke here malt I-grounde
 ¶ And on a day / it happed in a stounde 3992
 Seke lay the Maunciple / on a maladie
 Men wenden wysly / that he shulde deye
 ffor which this Millere / stal bothe mele & corn
 An hondred tymes more / than byforñ 3996
 ffor there biforn / he stale but curteisly
 But now he was a thef / outrageously
 ffor which the wardeyn chide / & made fare
 But perof sette the Millere / nought a tare 4000
 he craketh bost / and swor it was nat so
 ¶ Thanne were there 3onge / pore scoleres two
 That dwelleden in the halle / of which I sey
 Testyf they were / and lusty for to play 4004
 And only for here myrthe / and reuelrye
 vp-on on the wardeyn / besily they crye
 To 3eue hem leue / but a litel stounde
 To go to Mille / and sen here corn I-grounde 4008
 And hardily / they durst leyn here nekke
 The Millere shuld nat stelen hem / half a pekke
 Of corn / by sleight / ne by force hem reue
 And at the last / the wardeyn 3af hem leue 4012
 Ioñ hight pat one / & Aleyn hyght that other
 Of on toun were they born / that hight Strother
 ffor in the North / I can nat telle where
 This Aleyn maketh redy / al his gere 4016
 And on an hors / the sakke he cast a-non
 fforth goth Aleyn the Clerk / & also Ioñ
 with good swerde & bokeler / by here syde
 Ioñ knew the weye / hem nedeth no gyde 4020
 And at the last / the sakke doun he layth
 Aleyn spak first / al hayl Symond in fayth
 how fares thy fair doughter / and thy wyf
 ¶ Aleyn welcome quod Symkyn / be my lyf 4024

And Ioĥn also / how now what do 3e here
 By god *quod* Ioĥn / nede must / nede hath no pere
 hym byhoues to serue him self / þat has na swayn
 Or ellis he is a fool / as clerkes sayn 4028
 Oure Maunciple I hope / he wol be dede
 Swa werkes ay / the wanges in his hede
 And forthy is I come / & eke Alayn
 To grynde oure corn / and carye mele a-gayn 4032
 I pray 3ow spede vs hethen / what 3e may
 ¶  It shal be do *quod* Symkyn / be my fay
 What wyl 3e don / while þat it is in hand [leaf 49, back]
 By god / right by the hoper / wyl I stand 4036
 Quod Ioĥn / and se how the corn gas In
 3et saw I neuere / be my fader kyn
 how that the hoper / waggis tyl and fra
 Aleyn answered / Ioĥn wylt thow swa 4040
 Than wyl I be by-nethe / be my croun
 And se how that the mele / falles doun
 In-tyl the trow / that shal be myn disport
 ffor Ioĥn in faith / I may be of 3oure sort 4044
 I is as ille a Myllere / as ar 3e
 ¶  This Millere smyleth / at here nycete
 And thought / al this nys / but for a wyle
 They wene þat no man / may hem begyle 4048
 But be my thrift / 3et shal I blere here eye
 ffor al the sleight / in here philosophie
 The more queynt creakes / that they make
 The more wol I stele / whan I take 4052
 In stede of flour / 3et wol I 3eue hem bren
 The grettest Clerkes / be nat the wysest men
 As whilom to the wolf / thus spak the Mare
 Of al here art / counte I nat a tare 4056
 Ouzt at the dore / he goth ful preuily
 whan þat he sawgh his tyme / softly
 he loketh vp and doun / til he had found
 The Clerkes horse / there as it stod I-bound 4060

Behynde the Mylle / vnder a lefselle
 And to the hors / he goth him faire & wele
 And strepeth of the brydel / right a-non
 And whan the hors was loos / he begynneti to gon 4064
 Toward the fen / there wylde Mares renne
 And forth with we he / thorough thikke & thenne
 ¶ This Millere goth a-geyn / no word he seid
 But doth his note / & with the Clerkes pleyd 4068
 Til that here corn / was faire & wel I-grounde
 And whan the Mele is sakked / & I-bounde
 This Iohn goth ouzt / and fynt his hors a-wey
 And gan to crye herrowe / and weylawey 4072
 Oure hors is lost / Aleyn / for goddes banes
 Step on thy fete / come of man al at anes
 Allas oure wardeyn / has his palfrey lorin
 This Aleyn / al forgat / bothe Mele and corn 4076
 Al was oute of his mynde / his husbondrye
 what whilk weye is he gan / he gan crye
 The wyf cam lepyng inward / with a renne [leaf 50]
 She seide allas / ȝoure hors goth to the fenne 4080
 with wylde Mares / as fast as he may go
 Vnthank come on his hand / þat bond him so
 And he þat betir / shuld han knyht the reyne
 Allas quod Iohn / Aleyn for cristes peyne 4084
 lay down thy swerd / and I wyl myn alswa
 I is ful wyght / god wayt as is a raa
 By goddes hert / he shal nat skape vs bathe
 Why ne had thou put / the capul in the lathe 4088
 Il hayl / by god Aleyn / thou is a fonne
 ¶ Theise sely Clerkes / han ful fast I-ronne
 Toward the fen / bothe Aleyn & Iohn
 And whanne the Millere saw / þat they weren gon 4092
 he half a busschel / of here flour hath take
 And bad his wyf / go knede it in a kake
 he seide I trowe / the Clerkes ben a-ferd
 ȝet can a Millere / make a Clerkes berd 4096


ffor al his art / 3a lat hem gon here wey
 lo where they go / 3e late the children pley
 They get him nat / so lightly / be my croun
 Theise sely Clerkes / rennen vp and douñ 4100
 with kepe kepe / stand stand / Iossa warderere
 Ga / whistel thow / and I shal kepe him here
 But shortly / til it was verray nyght
 They coude nat / thoughñ they dede al here myght 4104
 here capel cacche / he ran alwey so fast
 Til in a dicke / they cached him at the last
 Wery and wete / as beest is in the reyn
 Cometh sely Iohn / & with him cometh Aleyn 4108
 ¶ Allas quod Iohn / that day that I was born
 Now are we dreuyn til hethyng / and to skorn
 Oure corn is stole / men wyl vs fonnes calle
 Bothe the wardeyn / and our felawes alle 4112
 And namely the Millere / weylawey
 Thus playneth Iohn / as he goth by the wey
 Toward the Mille / and bayard in his hond
 The Millere sitting by the fyr / he fond 4116
 ffor it was nyght / and ferthere myght þei nought
 But for the loue of god / they him bysought
 Of herberwe & of ease / as for here peny
 ¶ The Millere seide a-geyn / if here be eny 4120
 Swich as it is / 3et shuln 3e han 3oure part
 Myn hous is streyt / but 3e han lerned art
 3e conne by argumentez / maken a place
 A myle brod / of twenty fote of space [leaf 50, back] 4124
 late se now / if this place may suffice
 Or make it roume / with speche / as is 3oure gyse
 ¶ Now Symond seide this Iohn / by Seynt Cutberd
 Ay is thow mery / and þat is feir answerd 4128
 I haue herd sey / men sal ta / of twa thynges
 Slike as he fyndes / or ta slike as he brynges
 But specialy / I pray the Host dere
 Gar vs haue mete and drynk / & make vs chere 4132

And we sal paie trewely / at the fulle
 With empty hand / men moun na haukes tulle
 lo here oure siluer / redy for to spende
 ¶ ① This Millere / to the toun / his doughter sende 4136
 ffor ale and brede / and rosted hem a goos
 And bond here hors / it shulde no more go loos
 And in his owen chaumbre / hem mad a bed
 With shetes / and with chalons / faire I-spred 4140
 Nat fro his owen bed / ten fote or twelue
 His doughter had a bed / al by hire selue
 Right in þe same chaumbre / by and by
 It myght be no bet / and cause why 4144
 There was no roumere herberwe / in the place
 They soupen / and they speken of solace
 And drynken euere strong ale / at the best
 Aboute mydnyght / went they to rest 4148
 ¶ ① Wel hath this Millere / vernysshed his hede
 fful pale he was / for-dronke / and nat rede
 he ȝesketh / and he speketh thorough the nose
 As he were on the quak / or on the pose 4152
 To bedde he goth / & with him goth his wyf
 As ony Iay / she light was and iolyf
 So was hire ioly whistel / wel I-wette
 The cradel at hire beddes fete / is shette 4156
 To rokken / and to ȝeue the child souke
 And whan þat drunken al was / in the crouke
 To bedde went the doughter / 'right a-non
 To bedde goth Aleyn / and also Iohn 4160
 There was nomore / hem nedeth no dwale
 This Millere hath so wysely / bybed ale
 That as an hors / he snorteth in his slepe
 Ne of his tayl behynde / he toke no kepe 4164
 His wyf bar him a burdon / a ful strong
 Men myght here routyng heren / a furlong
 The wenche routed eke / par compaignye
 ¶ ① Aleyn the Clerk / that herd this melodye 4168

He poked Iohn / and seide slepes thow
 Herd thow euere slike a sang / or now
 Lo slike a complying / is ymeth hem alle [leaf 61]
 A wyld fyr / on theire bodies falle 4172
 Wha herd euere / slike a ferly thyng
 3e they sal haue / the flour of euele endyng
 This lang nyght / ne tydes me na rest
 But 3et na force / al sal be for the best 4176
 ffor Iohn seide he / as euere mot I thryue
 If þat I may / 3one lasse wol I swyue
 Som easement / has lawe shapen vs
 ffor Iohn there is a lawe / that seith thus 4180
 That gyf a man / in a poynt be greued
 That in a-nother / he shal be releued
 Oure corn is stolen / sothly it is na nay
 And we han had / an ylle fyt this day 4184
 And syn I sal haue / nan amendement
 Agayn my losse / I wyl haue an easement
 By goddes saule / it sal nan other be
 ¶ This Iohn answered / Aleyn a-vyse the 4188
 The Millere is a parlous man / he seide
 And gyf that he / ouzt of his slepe breyde
 he myght do vs bathe / a velanye
 Aleyn answered / I counte him nat a flye 4192
 vp he rist / and by the wenche he crepte
 This wenche lay vp-right / & faste slepte
 Til he so ny was / er she myght a-spye
 That it had ben to late / for to crye 4196
 And shortly for to seyn / they were at on
 Now pley Aleyn / for I wyl speke of Iohn
 ¶ This Iohn lith stille / a forlong wey or two
 And to him self / he maketh reuthe and woo 4200
 Allas quod he / this is / a wykked Iape
 Now may I sey / that I is but an Ape
 3et has my felawe / somewhat for his harm
 he has the Milleres doughter / in his arm 4204

he aunted him / and has his nedes spedde
 And I ly as a drafte / in my bedde
 And whan this iape / is tald another day
 I sal be halden a daffe / a Cokenay 4208
 I wyl aryse / and aunte it be my feith
 vnhardy / is vnsely / thus men seith
 And vp he roos / and softly he went
 Vn-to the cradel / and in his hand it hent 4212
 And bar it softe / vn-to his beddes fete
 ¶ ♀ Sone after this / the wyf hire routyng lete
 And gan a-wake / and went hire ouzt to pisse
 And cam a-geyn / and gan hire cradel mysse 4216
 And groped here and there / and she fond non [leaf 51, back]
 Allas quod she / I had almost mysgoñ
 I had almost gon / to the Clerkes bedde
 Ey benedicite / than had I foule spedde 4220
 And forth she goth / til she the cradil fonde
 She gropeth alwey / ferthere with hire honde
 And fond the bed / and pouzt nat but good
 By-cause that the cradil / by it stod 4224
 And nyst where she was / for it was derke
 And faire & wele / she crepte in by the clerke
 And lith ful stille / and wold han caught a slepe
 with-Inne a while / this Iohn the Clerk vp lepe 4228
 And on this goode wyf / he leyd on sore
 So mery a fit / ne had she nat ful 3ore
 he pryketh hard / and depe / as he were mad
 This ioly lyf / han theise two Clerkes lad 4232
 Til þat the .iiij. Cok / bygan to synge
 ¶ ♀ Aleyn wex wery / in the morwenynge
 ffor he had swonken / al the longe nyght
 And seide / fare wel Malkyn / swete wyght 4236
 The day is come / I may no lengere hyde
 But euere more / where so I go or ryde
 I is thyn owen Clerk / so haue I seele
 ¶ ♀ Now dere lemman quod she / go fare wele 4240

But er thow go / o thyng I wyl the telle
 Whan that þou wendest homward / by the Mille
 Right at the entre / of the dore behynde
 Thow shalt a cake / of a busschel fynde 4244
 That was I-maked / of thyn owen Mele
 which þat I halpe / my sire for to stele
 And good lemman / god the saue & kepe
 And with that word / almost he gan to wepe 4248
 ¶ ♀ Aleyn vp ryst / and thought er þat it dawē
 I wyl go crepe in / be my felawe
 And fond the cradil / at his hand a-non
 By god quod he / al wrang I had mysgon 4252
 Myn hed is toty / of my swynk to-nyght
 That makes me / that I go nat aright
 I wat wel by the Cradel / I haue mysgaa
 he lyes the Millere / and his wyf als wa 4256
 ¶ ♀ And forth he goth / a twenty deuele way
 Vn-to the bedde / þere as the Millere lay
 he wend han copen / by his felawe Ioħn
 And by the Millere / In he crepe a-non 4260
 And caught him by þe nekke / and softe he spake
 He seide thow Ioħn / þow swyneshede a-wake [leaf 52]
 ffor cristes soule / and here a noble game
 ffor by that lord / that called is Seynt Jame 4264
 As I haue thries / in this short nyght
 Swyued the Milleres doughter / bolt vp-right
 While thow hast / as a coward / ben a-gast
 ¶ ♀ 3e fals harlot / quod the Millere hast 4268
 A fals traytour / fals Clerk quod he
 Thow shalt be ded / by goddis dignyte
 Who durst be so bold / to disparage
 My doughter / þat is come / of swich lynage 4272
 And by the throte bolle / he caught Aleyn
 And he hent him / dispetously a-geyn
 And on the nose / he smot him with his fist
 Doun ran the bloody strem / vp-on his brest 4276

And in the flore / with nose & mouth to-broke
 They walwen / as don / tweyne pygges in a poke
 And vp they gon / and doun a-geyn a-non
 Til þat the Millere / spurned at a ston 4280
 And doun he fel bakward / vp-on his wyf
 That wyst no thyng / of this nyce stryf
 ffor she was falle a-slepe / a litel wyght
 with Iohn the Clerk / that waked had al nyght 4284
 And with the fal / out of hire slepe she breyde
 help holy croys of Bromholme / she seide
 In manus tuas / lord to the I calle
 A-wake Symkyn / the fend is on me falle 4288
 Myn hert is broken / help I nam but dede
 There lith vp-on my wombe / & on myn hede
 help Symkyn / for the fals Clerkes fight
 ¶  This Iohn stirt vp / als fast as euere he myght 4292
 And gropeth by the walles / to and fro
 To fynde a staf / and she stert vp also
 And knew the estres / bet þanne dide this Iohn
 And by the wal / a staf she fond a-non 4296
 And saw a litel slemeryng / of a light
 ffor at an hole / in shon the Mone bright
 And by þat light / she saw hem bothe two
 But sekerly she nyst / who was who 4300
 But as she saw / a whit þing in hire eye
 And whan she gan / this white þing asprie
 She wende the Clerk / had wered a volupere
 And with the staf / she drow ay nere & nere 4304
 And wend han hit / this Aleyn at the fulle
 And smot the Millere / on the pyled skulle
 That doun he goth / and cried Harrow I dye [leaf 52, back]
 Theise Clerkes / bete hym wele / and lete him lye 4308
 And ordeyned hem / and toke here hors a-non
 And eke here mele / and on here weye they gon
 And at the Mille / ȝet they toke here cake
 Of half a busshel flour / ful wel I-bake 4312

¶ Thus is the proud Millere / wel I-bete
 And hath I-lost / the gryndyng of the whete
 And paid for þe sopere / euerydele
 Of Aleyn and of Iohn / þat beten him wele 4316
 his wyf is swyued / and his doughter als
 lo / swich it is / a Millere to be fals
 And þerfore / this prouerbe / is seid ful soth
 hym thar nat wene wel / that euele doth 4320
 A gylour / shal him-self / begyled be
 And got þat sitteth heye / in mageste
 Saue al this companye / grete and smale 4323
 Thus haue I quyt the Millere / in my tale ¶ quod the Reve

¶ Thus endeth the Reues Tale /

[No break in the MS.]

& bigynneth the prologe of the Cook

The Cok of london / while the Reve spak
 ffor ioye him pought / he clawed him on the bak
 A ha quod he / for cristes passioñ
 This Millere hadde / a sharp conclusioñ 4328
 Vp-on this argument / of herberwegage
 wel seide Salamon / in his langage
 Ne bryng nat euery man / in-to thyn hous
 ffor herberwyng by nyght / is parlyous 4332
 Wel ought a man / avysed for to be
 Whom that he brought / in-to his preuyte
 I preye to god / so ȝeue me sorwe and care
 If euere sithe / I hight hogge of ware 4336
 Herde I a Millere / bettir sette a-werke
 He hedde a iape of Malice / in the derke
 But god forbede / that we stynten here
 And therfore / if ȝe wouchensaf to here 4340
 A tale of me / that am a pore man
 I wol ȝow telle / as wel as euere I can
 A litel iape / that fel in oure Citee 4343
 ¶ Oure host answered / and seide / I graunte it the
 Now telle on Roger / and loke þat it be good
 ffor many a paste / hast thow laten blod
 And many a lakke of Dover / hast thow sold
 That hath ben twyes hot / & twyes cold 4348
 Of many a pilgrym / hast thow cristes curs [leaf 53]
 ffor of thy parselee / ȝet they fare the wers
 That they han eten / in thy stobel goos
 ffor in thy shoppe / is many a flye loos 4352
 Now telle on gentil Roger / be thy name
 But ȝet I preye the / be nat wroth for game
 And man may sey ful soth / in game and pleye
 ¶ Thow seist ful soth / quod Roger / be my feye 4356

But swhich pley / quade pley / as the flemmyng seith
 And perfore herry Bailly / be thy feith
 Be thow nat wroth / er we departe heere
 Though that my tale / be of an hostelere 4360
 But natheles / I wol nat telle it yet
 But er we parte / I-wysse þou shalt be quyt
 And ther-with-alle / he lough & made chere
 And seide his tale / as ȝe shuln after here 4364

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ The Cookes Tale

A Prentys whilom / dwelled in oure Citee
 Of a craft / of vetayleres was he
 And Gaillard was he / as a Goldffynch in þe shawe
 Broun as a Bery / a propre short felawe 4368
 With lokkes blake / kembed ful fetisly
 Daunce he koude / so wel and iolyly
 That he was cleped / Perkyn reuelour
 he was as ful of loue / and paramour 4372
 As is the hyue / ful of hony swete
 Wel was the wenche / with him myght mete
 At euery brydale / wold he synge and hoppe
 He loued bet the tauerne / þan the shoppe 4376
 ffor whan there ony ridyng was in Chepe
 Out of the shoppe / thider wold he lepe
 Til þat he had / al the sight I-seyn
 And daunced wele / he nolde nat come ageyn 4380
 And gadred him a meyne / of his sort
 To hoppe & synge / and make swich disport
 And there they setten steuene / for to mete
 To play at the dys / in swich a strete 4384
 ffor in the Toun / nas there no Prentys
 That fairere coude kast / a peyre of Dys
 Than Perkyn coude / and ther-to he was free
 Of hys dispence / in place of preuyte 4388
 That fond his Maister wel / in his chaffare
 ffor oft tyme he fond / his box ful bare [leaf 53, back]
 ffor sothly / a Prentys a Reuelour
 That haunteth Dys / riot / & Paramour 4392
 his maister shal it / in his shoppe a-bye
 Al haue he no part / of the Mynstralsye
 ffor theft and riot / they ben conuertible
 Al can he pleye / on gyterne or ribble 4396

Reuel and trouthe / as in a lowe degre
 They ben ful wrothe / al day / as men may se
 ¶ This ioly Prentis / with his maister stode
 Til he was ny / out of his Prentyshode 4400
 Al were he enybbed / bothe erly and late
 And somtyme lad / with reuel to Newgate
 But at the last / his Maister him bythought
 Vp-on a day / whan he his paper sought 4404
 Of a prouerbe / that seith this same word
 Wel bet is roten Appel / out of hord
 Than that he rote / al the remenaunt
 So fareth it / by a riotous seruauant 4408
 It is ful lasse harm / to late him passe
 Than he shende alle / the seruantes in the place
 Therfore his Maister / gaf him acquietance
 And bad him go / with sorwe / & with meschaunce 4412
 And thus this ioly Prentys / had his leue
 Now late him riote / al the nyght / or leue
 And for there nys no thef / with-oute a louke
 That helpeth him / to wasten and to souke 4416
 Of that he bribe can / or borwe may
 A-non he sent his bed / and his array
 Vn-to a Compere / of his owen sorte
 That loued Dys / ryot and desporte 4420
 And had a wyf / þat held for countenaunce
 A shoppe / and swyued for hire sustenaunce

[*Rest of page blank.*]

¶ Sic desinit fabula Coci / [leaf 54]

(Man of Law's Head-Link.)

et Incipit prologus Legis periti:

Oure Host saw wel / þat the bright sonne
 The ark of his artificiale day / hath ronne
 The ferthe part / and half an oure & more
 And thought he were not / depe I-stert in lore 4
 He wist it was / the eight and twenty day
 Of Aprilþ / that is messanger vn-to May
 And saw wel / þat the shadewe of euery tree
 was as in lengthe / the same quantite 8
 That was the body erecte / that causet it
 And þerfore by the shadewe / he tok his wyt
 That phebus / which þat shone / so clere and bright
 Sixe degrees was fyue & fourty clombe on height 12
 And for that day / as in that latitude
 It was ten of the klok / he gan conclude
 And sodeynly he plight / his hors a-boute
 lordynggis quod he / I warne þow alle this route 16
 The ferthe partie of this day / is gon
 Now for the loue of god / & of Seynt Iohn
 leseth no tyme / as ferforth as þe may
 lordyngges the tyme wasteth / nyght & day 20
 And steleth from vs / what preuily slepynge
 And what þorough negligence / in our wakyng
 As doth the strem / that turneth neuere a-geyn
 Descendyng fro the mounteyn / in-to a pleyn 24
 Wel can Senek / and many a Philosophre
 Bywaylen tyme / more than gold in coffre
 ffor losse of catel / may recouered be
 But losse of tyme / shendeth vs quod he 28

K

It wyl not comen a-geyn / withouten drede
 No more than wyl / Malkyns maydenhede
 Whan she hath lost it / in hire wantounesse
 lat vs nought mowlen thus / in Idelnesse 32
 Sire man of lawe quod he / so haue 3e blisse
 Tells vs a tale a-non / as forward isse
 3e ben submytted / thurgh 3oure free assent
 To stonden in this cas / at my Iugement 36
 Acquiteth 3ow now / of 3oure byhest
 Than han 3e don / 3oure deuer at the lest
 host quod he / de par dieux iche assent
 To breke forward / is not myn entent 40
 Byhest is dette / and I wol holde fayne
 Al my behest / I can no betre sayne
 ffor swich lawe as a man 3eueþ / a-noþer wyght [leaf 54, back]
 he shulde him selue vsen it / be right 44
 Thus wyl oure text / but natheles certeyn
 I can right now / no thrifty tale seyn
 But Chaucer / though he can but lewedly
 On meetris / and on rymyng craftily 48
 hath seid hem / in swich englissh as he can
 Of olde tyme / as knoweth many a man
 And if he haue nouzt seid hem / leue brother
 In a boke / he hath seid hem / in a-nother 52
 ffor he hath told of louyers / vp and downe
 Moo than Ouyde made of / mencione
 In hise epistles / than ben ful olde
 What shulde I telle hem / syn they ben tolde 56
 In 3outhe he made / of Ceys and Alcione
 And sithen hath he spoken / of euerychone
 Theise noble wyues / and theise louyers eke
 Who so þat wyl / his large volume seke 60
 Cleped the Seyntes legende / of cupide
 There may he sen / the large woundes wyde
 Of lucesse / and of babilan Tesbe
 The swerd of Dido / for the fals Ene 64

The tree of phillis / for hir demophon	
The pleynte of Diane / and of Hermyon	
Of Adriane / and Isiphilee	
The baraigne Isle / stondyng in the see	68
The dreynte leandre / for his erro	
And teeres of Eleyne / and eke the woo	
Of Brixseide / and of the ladomya	
The cruelte / of the Quene Medea	72
Thy litel children hangyng / by the hals	
ffor thy Ioson / that was of loue so fals	
Of Parmystre / Penelope Alceste	
3oure wyfhode / 3e comende with the beste	76
But certeynly / no word wryteth he	
Of thilke wykked ensauple / of Canacee	
That loued hire owen brother / synfully	
Of swiche cursed stories / I seye fy	80
Or ellis of Tiro / Appollonius	
how þat the cursed kyng / Antiochus	
Biraft hire doughter / of hire maydenhede	
That is so horrible a tale / for to rede	84
Whan he hire threwe / vp-on the paument	
And therfore he / of ful auysement	[leaf 55]
Nolde neuere wryte / in none of hise sermons	
Of swich vnkynde / abhominacions	88
Ne I wyl noon reherce / if þat I may	
But of my tale / how shal I don this day	
Me were loth / be likned doutelees	
To muses / þat men clepe pierides	92
Methamorphosios / woot what I mene	
But natheles / I recche not a bene	
Though I come after him / with hawe bake	
I speke in prose / and lat him rymes make	96
And with that word / he with a sober chere	
Bygan his tale / as 3e shuln after here	98

¶ Hic finitur prologus legis periti /

[No break in the MS.]

et incipit fabula eiusdem :

O Hateful harme / condicione of pouerte 99
 with thrust with cold / with honger so confounded
 To asken helpe / the shameth in thyn herte
 If thou noon aske / so sore art þow I-wounded 102
 That verray nede / vnwrappeth alle thy wounde hid
 Maugre thyn heede / thou must for indigence
 Or stale or begge / or borwe thyn dispenche 105

¶ Thow blamest crist / and seist ful bitterly
 he mysdeparteth / ricchesse temporal
 Thy neygebore / thou wytest synfully
 And seist þou hast to lite / and he hath al 109
 Parfey seist þou / sumtyme he rekne shal
 Whan þat his taylle / shal brennen in the glede
 ffor he nought helpeth / nedeful in here nede 112

¶ Herkeneth what is the sentence / of the wyse
 Bette is to deyen / than haue indigence
 Thy selue neygebore / wyl the despise
 If thou be pore / fare wel thy reuerence 116
 3et if the wyse man / take this sentence
 Alle the dayes of poore men / ben wykke
 Be war þefore / er þou come to þat prikke 119

¶ If þou be pore / thy brother hateth the
 And alle thyne frendes / fien fro the / allas
 O riche marchaunte3 / ful of wele ben 3e
 O noble o prudent folk / as in this cas 123
 3oure bagges be nouȝt filled / with aumbes-as
 But with sys synk / þat renneth for 3oure chaunce
 At Cristemasse / merie may 3e daunce [leaf 55, back] 126

¶ 3e seken lond and see / for 3oure wyynynges
 As wyse folk 3e knowen / alle the estat
 Of regnes / 3e ben fadres of tidynges
 And tales / both of pees and of debat 130
 I were right now / of tales desolat
 Ner that a Marchaunt / gon is many a 3ere
 Me taught a tale / which þat 3e shal here 133

[As there is no room in this print for the Latin notes in the margin of the MS., they are put here, with the numbers of the lines to which they refer.]

1. 197. ¶ *Ceptra phoronei fratrum discordia thebe flammam phetontis deucalionis aque. In stellis priami species audacia turni sensus vlixus herculeus que vigor &c.* [leaf 56]

1. 295. Vnde Ptholomeus libro 1^o / capitulo .x^o. primi motus celi / duo sunt / quorum vnus est / qui mouet totum semper / ab oriente in occidentem / vno modo super orbes &c. Item aliter vero motus est / qui mouet orbem stellarum currencium contra motum primum / videlicet ab occidente in orientem super alios duos polos &c. [leaf 57]

1. 309. ¶ *Omnes concordati sunt quod electiones sint debiles nisi in diuitibus habent enim isti licet debilitentur eorum electiones radicem . id est . natiuitates eorum que confortat omnem planetam debilem in itinere &c.* [leaf 57, back]

1. 421. ¶ *Nota de inopinato dolore . ¶ Semper mundane leticie tristicia repentina succedit / Mundana igitur felicitas multis amaritudinibus est repersa . extrema gaudii luctus occupat Audi ergo salubre consilium in die bonorum ne immemor sis malorum !* [lf. 58, bk.]

1. 771. ¶ *Quid turpinus ebrioso / cui fetor in ore. tremor in corpore. qui promit stulta. prodit occulta. cui mens alienatur. facies transformatur nullum enim latet secretum / vbi regnat ebrietas !* [lf. 62, bk.]

1. 925. ¶ *O extrema libidinis turpitudine que non solum mentem effeminat / set eciam corpus eneruat / semper secuntur dolor & penitencia post &c.* [leaf 64]

1. 1130. ¶ *A mane vsque ad vesperam mutabitur tempus / tenent tympanum & gaudent ad sonum organi &c.* [leaf 66, back]

1. 1135. ¶ *Quis vnquam vnicam diem totam duxit in sua dilectione iocundam / quem in aliqua parte dici / reatus consciencie viz. / impetus / ire / vel motus concupiscencie non turbauerit // quem liuor vel ardor auaricie vel tumor superbie non vexauerit quem aliqua iactura vel offensa vel passio non commouerit &c.* [leaf 66, back]

[PART I.]

¶ In Surrye whilom / dwelled a companye
 Of chapmen riche / and ther-to sad & trewe
 That wyde where / senten here spicerye
 Clothes of gold / of satyn / riche of hewe 137
 here chaffare was so thrifty / & so newe
 That euery wyght / hath deynte to chaffare
 With hem / & eke to sellen hem here ware 140

¶ Now fel it / þat the maistres of þat sorte
 Han shapen hem / to Rome for to wende
 Were it for chapmanhod / or for disport
 Non other message / wold they thidder sende 144
 But comen hem selue / to Rome / this is the ende
 And in swich place / as thought hem auauntage
 ffor here entente / they take here herbergage 147

¶ Soiourned han theise Marchaunt3 / in that toun
 A certayne tyme / as fel to here plesaunce
 And so byfel / that the excellent renoun
 Of the Emperoures doughter / Dame Custaunce 151
 Reported was / with euery circumstance
 Vn-to theise Surryen Marchaunt3 / in swich a wyse
 ffro day to day / as I shal 3ow deuyse 154

¶ This was the comune voys / of euery man
 Oure Emperoure of Rome / god him se
 A doughter hath / that syn the world bygan
 To rekne as wel hire goodnesse / as beaute 158
 Nas neuere swich a-nother / as is she
 I preye to god in honour / hire sustene
 And wolde she were / of al Europe the Quene 161

¶ Europa est tercia pars mundi

¶ In hire is heigh beaute / with-outen pride
 3outhes with-outen greenheede / or of folye
 To alle hire werkes / vertu is hire gyde
 Humblesse hath slayn in hire / al tirannye 165
 She is myrour / of al curteisye
 hir herte is verrey chaumbre / of holynesse
 hir / and Ministre / of freedom / for almesse 168

¶ And al this voys was soth / as god is trewe
 But now to purpos / lat vs turne a-gayne
 Theise Marchauntz han don fraught / here sheppes newe
 And whan they han / this blisful mayden sayne [leaf 56]
 Hom to Surrye / ben they went ful fayne 173
 And don here nedes / as they han don 3ore
 And lyuen in wele / I can sey 3ow no more 175

¶ Now fel it / that theise Marchauntz stoden in grace
 Of hym þat was / the Soudon of Surrie
 That whan they come / fro any straunge place
 he wolde of his benygne / curteisie 179
 Make hem good cheer / and bisily asprie
 Tidynge / of sondry regnes for to lere
 The wondres that they / myght seen or here 182

¶ Amonges othere thynges specially
 Theise Marchauntz han him told / of Dame Custaunce
 So greet noblesse / in earnest ceriously
 That this Soudan hath caught / so gret plesaunce 186
 To han hire figure / in his remembraunce
 That al his lust / and his besy cure
 was for to loue hire / while his lif may dure 189

¶ Paraventure / in thilke large boke
 which þat men clepe / the heuene / I-wryten was
 with sterres / whan that he his birthe toke
 That he for loue / shulde han his deth allas 193

ffor in the sterres clerere / than is glas
 I-wryten is¹ god wot / who so coude it rede [¹ is *overline*,
later]
 The deth of euery man / with-ouen drede 196

¶ In sterres / many a wynter there biforn [Latin note, p. 133]
 was wretyn the deth / of Ector Achilles
 Of pompey Iulyus / er they were born
 The strif of Thebes / and of Hercules 200
 Of Sampson / Turnus / and of Socrates
 The deth / but mennes wyttes ben so dulle
 That no wyght can wel rede it / at the fulle 203

¶ This Soudan / for his pryue counsaile sent
 And shortly of this mater / for to pace
 he hath to hem declared / his entent
 And seide hem certeyn / but he myght han grace 207
 To haue Custaunce / with-inne a litel space
 he nas but dede / and charged hem in hye
 To shapen for his lyf / som remedye 210

¶ Diuerse men / diuerse thynges seiden
 They Argument; cast / vp and doun
 Many a subtil reson / forth they leiden
 They spoken of magyk / and of abusione 214
 But finally / as in conclusion
 Thoi can nat sen / in that non auauntage [leaf 56, back]
 As in none other wey / saue in mariage 217

¶ Than saw they þere-Inne / swich difficulte
 By weye of reson / for to speke al pleyne
 By cause that there was / swiche diuersite
 Bytwene here bothe lawes / that they seyne 221
 They trowe that no cristene prince / wolde feyne
 wedden his childe / vn-to our lawes swete
 That vs was taught / by Mahoum oure prophete 224

¶ And he answered / rather than I lese
 Custaunce / I wol be cristened doutelesse
 I mot ben hires / I may noon other chese
 I prey 3ow / holde 3oure argumentez in pes 228
 Saueth my lyf / and beth nought reccheles
 To getyn hire / that hath my lyf in cure
 ffor in this woo / I may not longe endure 231

¶ what nedeth grettere / dilatacion
 I seye be tretys / and embassatrye
 And by the Popes / mediacion
 And alle the chirche / and al the chyualrie 235
 That in destruccione / of maumentrie
 And in encesse / of cristes lawe dere
 They ben accorded / so as 3e shuln here 238

¶ how þat the Soudan / and his baronage
 And alle hise lieges / shulde I-cristened be
 And he shal haue Custaunce / in mariage
 And certeyne gold / I not what quantite 242
 And her to founden / sufficeant seurte
 This same accord / was sworn on either syde
 Now fair Custaunce / almyghty god the gyde 245

¶ Now wolde summe men / wayten as I gesse
 That I shulde tellen / al the purueance
 That the Emperour / of his grete noblesse
 hath shapen for his doughter / Dame Custaunce 249
 wel may men knowen / that so grete ordinaunce
 May no man telle / in a litel clause
 As was arrayed / for so heygh a cause 252

¶ Bisshopes ben shapen / with hire for to wende
 lordes ladies / knyghtes of renoun
 And othere folk I-nowe / this is the ende
 And notified is / thurgh-ouȝt the touȝn 256

That euery wyght / with gret deuocion
 Shulde preyen crist / that he this mariage
 Receyue in gree / and spede this viage 259

¶ The day is comen / of here departyng [leaf 57]
 I say the wooful day / fatal / is come
 That there may be / no lengere tariyng
 And forthward they hem dressen / alle & some 263
 Custaunce that was / with sorwe al ouercome
 fful pale arist / and dressith hire to wende
 ffor wel she seth / þere is noon other ende 266

¶ Allas what wonder is it / though she wepte
 That shal be sent / to straunge nacione
 ffro frendes / þat so tenderly hire kepte
 And to be bounde / vnder subieccione 270
 Of oon / she knowep nouzt / his condicione
 housbondes ben alle goode / and han ben þore
 That knowen wyues / I dar sey þow no more 273

¶ ffader she seide / thy wrecched child Custaunce
 Thy þonge doughliter / fostred vp so softe
 And ȝe my moder / my souereigne plesaunce
 Ouer alle thynges / out-take crist on loft 277
 Custaunce þoure child / hire recomaundeth oft
 vn-to þoure grace / for I shal to Surrye
 Ne shal I neuere / sen þow more with eye 280

¶ Allas vn-to the barbre / nacione
 I must goon / syn that it is þoure wylle
 But crist that starf / for oure sauacione
 So ȝeue me grace / hise hestes to fulfille 284
 I wrecched womman / no fors though I spille
 Wommen arn born / to thraldom & penaunce
 And to ben / vnder mannes gouernance 287

¶ I trowe at Troye / whan Pirrus brak the wal
 Or ylyon brende / Thebes the Citee
 Ne at Rome / for the harme thurgh hanybal
 That Romeyns han venquyssed / tymes three 291
 Nas herd / swich tendre wepyng / for pitee
 As in the chaumbre was / for hire departyng
 But forth she moot / wheiþer so she wepe or syng 294

¶ O first meeuing / cruel firmament [Latin note, p. 133.]
 With thy dyurnal sweigh / that crowdest ay
 And hurlest alle / fro Est til occident
 That naturelly wolde holde / a-nother wey 298
 Thy crowdyng sette the heuene / in swich array
 At the begynnynge / of this fiers viage
 That cruel Mars / hath slayn this mariage 301

¶ Infortunat ascendent tortuous
 Of which the lord / is helpees falle alas
 Out of his angle / in-to the derkest hous
 O Mars. o Athasir / as in this cas [leaf 57, back] 305
 O feble Mone / vnhappy ben thy paas
 Thow knytttest the / there þou art nought receyued
 There þou were wel / fro thens art þou weyued 308

¶ Imprudent Emperour / of Rome / alas [Latin note, p. 133.]
 Was þere no philosophre / in al thy toune
 Is no tyme bet than other / in swich a caas
 Of viage / is þere noon eleccione 312
 Namely to folk / of heigh condicione
 Nought whan a root / is of birthe I-knowe
 Allas we ben to lewed / or to slowe 315

¶ To shippe is brought / this wooful fair mayde
 Solempnely / with euery circumstance
 Now ihesu crist / be with 3ow alle she sayde
 There nys namore / but fare-wel fair Custaunce 319

She peyneth hire / to make good countenaunce
 And forth I lete hire seyle / in this manere
 And turne I wyl a-geyn / to my matere 322

¶ The moder of the Soudan / welle of vices
 A-spied hath / hire sones pleynt entent
 How he wolde lete / his olde sacrificys
 And right a-noon / she for hire counseil sent 326
 And they ben come / to knowe what she ment/
 And whan assembled was / this folk in fere
 She sette hire down / and seyde as 3e shuln here 329

¶ lordes she seide / 3e knowen euerychone
 How that my sone / in poynt is for to lete
 The holy lawes / of oure Alkarone
 3ouen by goddes messanger / Macamete 333
 But oon a-vow / to grete god I hete
 The lif shal rather / out of my body stert
 Er Macametes lawe / out of myn hert 336

¶ what shulde vs tiden / of this newe lawe
 But thraldome to oure bodies / and penaunce
 And afterward in helle / to ben drawe
 ffor we reneyed Mahoun / oure creaunce 340
 But lordes wol 3e maken / assauraunce
 As I shal seyn / assentyng to my loore
 And I shal make vs saf / for euere more 343

¶ They sworn & assentyn / euery man
 To liue with hire & deye / & by hire stonde
 And euerich / in the best wyse / he can
 To strengthe hire / shal alle hise frendes fonde 347
 And she hath this emprise / I-take on honde
 which 3e shal heren / that I shal deuyse
 And to hem alle / she spak right in this wyse [leaf 58] 350

¶ we shuln first feyne vs / cristendome to take
 Cold water shal nouȝt greue vs / but a lite
 And I shal swich a feest / and reuel make
 That as I trowe / I shal the Soudan quyte 354
 ffor though his wyf be cristened / neuere so whyte
 She shal haue nede / to wasshe a-wey the rede
 Though she a fontful water / with hire lede 357

¶ O Soudanesse / roote of iniquite
 Virago thow semirame / the secounde /
 O serpent / vnder femynyntee
 like to the serpent / depe in helle I-bounde 361
 O feyned womman / al that may confounde
 Vertue and innocence / thurgh thy malice
 Is bred in the / as neste of euery vyce 364

¶ O Sathan enuyous / syn thilke day
 That thow were chased / from oure heritage
 wel knowest þou / to wommen the olde way
 Thow madest Eue / brynge vs in seruage 368
 Thow wylt for-don / this cristene mariage
 Thyn instrument / so welawey the whyle
 Makest þou of wommen / whan þou wylt begyle 371

¶ This Soudanesse / whom I thus blame & warye
 leet pryuely hire counseil / gon here way
 what shulde I in this tale / lengere tary
 She rideth to the Soudan / on a day 375
 And seide him that she wolde / reneye hire lay
 And cristendome / of prestes handes fonge
 Repentyng hire / she hethene was so longe 378

¶ Bysechyng him / to don hire that honour
 That she must han / the cristene folk to fest
 To plesen hem / I wyl do my labour
 The Soudan seith / I wyl don at þoure hest 382

And knelynge thanketh hire / of that request
 So glad was he / he nyst what to seye
 She kist hire sone / and hom she goth hire weye 385

¶ Desinit prima pars [in margin]

¶ Incipit secunda pars [in margin]

¶ **A**ryued ben / theise cristene folk to londe
 In Surrye / with a gret solempne route
 And hastilich this Soudan / sent his sonde
 ffirst to his moder / and al the regne a-boute 389
 And seide / his wyf was comen / out of doute
 And preyede hire for to ride / a-geyne the Quene
 The honour of his regne / to sustene 392

¶ Greet was the prees / and riche was the Arraye
 Of Surreyens and Romayns / mette I-feere
 The moder of the Soudan / riche and gay [leaf 58, back]
 Receyueth hire / with al so glad a chere 396
 As any moder myght / hire doughter deere
 And to the next Citee / there beside
 A softe paas / solempnely they ride 399

¶ Nought trowe I / the triumpe of Iulius
 Of which that lucan / maketh swich a boost
 Was reallere / or more curious
 Than was the assemble / of this blisful oost 403
 But this scorpion / this wykked gost
 The Soudanesse / for al hire flaterynge
 Cast vnder this / ful mortally to styng 406

¶ The Soudan cometh him selue / sone after pis
 So really / that wonder is to telle
 he welcometh hire / with alle ioye & blisse
 And thus in myrthe & ioye / I lat hem dwelle 410

The fruyt of this mater / is that I telle
 Whan tyme come / men thougt it for the best
 That reuel stynt / and men gon to here rest 413

¶ The tyme come / this olde Soudanesse
 Ordeyned had this fest / of whiche I tolde
 And to the feest / cristen folk hem dresse
 In general / 3e bothe 3onge and olde 417
 here moun men feest / and realte beholde
 And deyntees moo / than I can 3ow deuyse
 But al to dere / they bought it er they ryse 420

¶ O sodeyn woo / that euere art successour [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
 To worldly blisse / spreynde with bitternesse
 The ende of the ioie / of oure worldly labour
 woo / occupieth the fyn / of oure gladnesse 424
 herkene this counseil / for thy sekirnesse
 vp-on thy glad day / haue in thy mynde
 The vnwar woo / or harm / þat cometh behynde 427

¶ ffor shortly to tellen / at a word
 The Soudan / & the cristene euerichone
 Ben al to-hewe / and stiked at the bord
 But it were only / dame Custaunce allone 431
 This olde Soudanesse / cursed crone
 hath with hire frendes / doon this cursed dede
 ffor she hire selue wolde / al the contree lede 434

¶ Ne was Surryen noon / that was conuerted
 That of the counseil / of the Soudan woot
 That he nas al to-hewe / er he a-started
 And Custaunce han they take / a-none foot hoot 438
 And in a shippe / al steereles god woot/
 They han hire sette / and bidden hire lerne saile [*leaf 50*]
 Out of Surrie / ageynward to Itaile 441

¶ A certeyn tresore / that she thidder ladde
 And sothe to seyn / vitaille gret plantee
 They han hire ȝeuen / & clothes eke she hadde
 And forth she seileth / in the salt See 445

O my Custaunce / ful of benignytee
 O Emperoures / ȝonge doughter deere
 he þat is lord ouer fortune / be thy steere 448

¶ She blissed hire / and with ful pitous vois
 Vn-to the Croos of crist / thus seide she
 O cleer / o welful auter / holy croys
 Reed of the lambes blood / ful of pitee 452
 That wesshe the world / fro þe olde iniquite
 Me fro the fende / and fro his clawes kepe
 That day þat I shal drenchen / in the depe 455

¶ Victorious tree / proteccione of trewe
 That oonly worthy were / for to bere
 The kyng of heuene / with hise woundes newe
 The whit lamb þat hurt was / with a spere 459
 flemer of feendes / out of him and heere
 On which thy lymes / feithfully extenden
 Me kepe / and ȝeue me myght / my lif to amenden 462

¶ Ȝeres and dayes / fleetith this creature
 Thurgh-out the see / of Grece / vn-to the straye
 Of Marrok / as it was hire auenture
 O many sory meel / now may she bayte 466
 After hire deth / ful often may she wayte
 Er that the wyld wawes / wyn hire dryue
 Vn-to the place / there she shal arryue 469

¶ Men myght asken / why she was nouȝt slayne
 Eke atte feest / whoo myght hire body saue
 And I answee / to that demaunde a-gayne
 Who saued Danyel / in the horrible caue 473

There euery wyght saw he / maister and knaue
Was with the leoun / freet / er he a-sterre
No wyght but god / that he bar in his herte 476

¶ God list to shewe / his wonderful myracle
In hire / for we shulde / seen his mighty werkes
Crist which pat is / to euery harm triacle
By certeyn menes oft / as knowen clerkes 480
Doth thyng for certeyn ende / that ful derk is
To mannes wyt / that for oure ignoraunce
Ne konne nought knowe / his prudent purueaunce 483

¶ Now sithe she was nought / at the feest I-slawe
Who kepte hire fro the drenchyng in the See [leaf 50, back]
Who kepte Ionas / in the fysshes mawe
Til he was spouted vp / at Nynyuee 487
wel may men knowe / it was no wyght but hee
That kepte peeples Ebrayk / fro here drenchyng
With drye feet / thurgh-out the see passyng 490

¶ Who bad the foure spiriteȝ / of tempest
That power han / to anoyen lond and see
Bothe North and south / and also west and Est
Anoyeth neither see / ne lond ne tree 494
Sothely the comaundour / of that was he
That fro the tempest / ay this womman kepte
As wel whan she wook / as whan she slepte 497

¶ Where myght this womman / mete & drynk haue
Thre ȝer & more / how lasteth hire vetaille
who fedde the egipcienne Marye / in the caue
Or in desert / no wyght but crist saunȝ faille 501
ffyue thousand folk / it was as gret meruaylle
With lounes fyue / and fisshes two to fede
God sent his foysoȝ / at here grete nede 504

L



¶ She dryueth forth / in to oure occeane
 Thurgh-out oure wylde see / til at the laste
 Vnder an hold / that nempnen I ne can
 ffer in Northumberland / the wawe hire caste 508
 And in the sond / hire ship stiked so faste
 That thens wold it nought / of al a tyde
 The wyl of criste was / that she shulde a-byde 511

¶ The Constable of the Castel / doun is fare
 To sen his wreck / and al the ship he sought
 And fond this wery womman / ful of care
 he fond also / the tresor þat she brought 515
 In hire langage / mercy she bysought
 The lyf out of hire body / for to twynne
 hire to delyuere of woo / that she was Inne 518

¶ A maner latyn corrupt / was hire speche
 But algates ther-by / was she vnderstonde
 The Constable whan him list / no lengere seche
 This wooful womman / brought he to the londe 522
 She kneleth doun / and thanketh goddes sonde
 But what she was / she wold noman say
 ffor foule ne fayr / though that she shulde deye 525

¶ She seide she was / mased in the See
 That she forgat / hir mynde be hire trouthe
 The Constable hath of hire / so gret pitee
 And eke his wyf / that þei wepen for routhe [Dd. ends; leaves
60, 61 gone.]
 She was so diligent with-outen sleuth [Egerton 2726 begins,
leaf 71]
 To serue and plesse euerycch in that place
 That all hir loven that loken in hir face 532

¶ This Constable and Dame Hermengild his wif
 Weren payens / and þat cuntre euery where
 But Hermengild loued hir right as hir lyf
 And Custaunce hath so long soiourned þere 536

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

GROUP B. § 2. MAN OF LAW'S TALE. Egerton 2726. 147

In orisons with many a bitter tere
 TiH Ihesu hath conuerted thurgh his grace
 Dame Hermengild Constablesse of that place 539

¶ In aH that lond no cristen) durst route
 AH cristen) folk ben) fledde from) þat contree
 Thurgh payens that conquered aH about/
 The plagis of the North by lond and see 543
 To Wales fledde the cristianite
 Of old bretons dwellyng in this Ile
 There was her refute for þe mene while 546

¶ But yitte nere cristen) bretons so exiled
 That there nere som) / that in her preuetee
 Honoured Crist / and hethen) folk begiled
 And nye the CasteH / soch þer dwellen) .iij. 550
 That one of hem was blynd and myght nat see
 But it were with thilk eyen) of his mynd
 With which men seen) / whan that þey be blynd 553

¶ Bright was the son) / as in that somers day
 ffor which the constable and his wyf also
 And Custaunce han) take the right way
 Toward the see / a furlong way or two 557
 To playen) and to romen) to and fro
 And in her walk this blynd man þey mette
 Croked and old with eyen) fast yshette 560

¶ IN name of crist kried this blynd bretoun
 Dame Hermengild / yeve me my sight ageyn)
 This lady waxe affraied of þe soun)
 Lest that hir husbond / shortly for to seyn) 564
 Wold hir for Ihesu cristes loue haue sleyn
 TiH Custaunce made hir bold / and bad hir wirche
 The wiH of Crist / as doughter of his chirche 567

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

¶ The Constable wax abashed of that sight/ [leaf 71, back]

And seid what amounteth all this fare
Custaunce answerd / sire it is Cristes myght
That helpeth folk / out of the fendes snare 571
And so ferforth / she gan our lay declare
That she the Constable / or that it was eve
Conuerteth / and on Crist maketh him byleve 574

¶ The Constable was no thyng lord of this place
Of which I speke / there as he Custaunce fonde
But kept it strongly many a wynters space
Vnder Alla kyng of all Northumberlond 578
That was full wys and worthy of his honde
Agayn þe Scottes as men may wel here
But turne I wold ageyn to my matere 581

¶ Sathan that vs waiteth ever to begile
Sawh of Custaunce all her perfeccion
And cast anon how he myght quyte hir while
And made a yong knyght / that dwelt in the toun 585
Love hir so hote of foule affeccion
That verrelly hym thought / he shold spiþ
But he of hir myght ones haue his wiþ 588

¶ He woveth hir but it availeth nought
She wold do no synne by no wey
And for despit he compassed in his thought
To make hir on shames deth to deye 592
He waiteth whan the Constable was away
And prively vpon a nyght he crepte
In Hermynghildes chambre while she slepte 595

¶ Wery for-waked in her orisons
Slepeth Custaunce and Hermynghild also
This knyght thurgh Sathanas temptacions
All softly is to the bed ygoo 599

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

And kutte the throte of Hermynghild a-two
 And leid the blody knyf by Dame Custaunce
 And went his wey / ther god yeve him meschaunce 602

¶ Sone after comth this constable home agayn
 And eke Alla that kyng was of þat lond
 And saugh his wyf dispitously slayn
 ffor which full oft he wepe / and wrong his honde 606
 And in the bedde / the blody knyf he fonde /
 By Dame Custaunce / alas what myght he sey [leaf 72]
 ffor verrey woo / his witte was all away 609

¶ To kyng Alla was told all this myschaunce
 And eke the tyme and where / and in what wise
 That in ship was found this Custaunce
 As ye han here-beforn herd devise 613
 The kynges hert of pitee gan agrise
 Whan he saugh / so benigne a creature
 ffall in disease and mysaventure 616

¶ ffor as the lombe toward his deth is brought/
 So stant this Innocent byfore this kyng
 This fals knyght that hath this treson wrought/
 Bereth hir on honde þat she hath don this thing 620
 But natheles ther was grete morenyng
 Among / the peple / and seyn þey can nat gesse
 þat she hade don so grete a wikkednesse 623

¶ ffor they han seen hir euere so vertuous
 And lovyng Hermengild right as hir lyf
 Of this bare witnes / euerycch in that hous
 Saue he þat Hermengild slough with his knyf 627
 This gentill kyng hath caught a grete motyf
 Of thise witnes / and thought he wold enquere
 Depper in this mater / a trowth for to bere 630

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

¶ Allas Custaunce þou hast no champion
 Ne fight canst þou nought so wele a wey
 But he þat starf for our redempcion
 And bond Sathan and lyeth there he lay 634
 So be thy strong Champion this day
 ffor but Crist open myracle kythe
 withouten gilt þou shalt be slayn as swythe / 637

¶ She sette hir down on knees / and thus she seid.
 Inmortall god that savedest Susanne
 ffrom fals blame / and þou merciful meid.
 Marie I mene daughter to Seint Anne 641
 Byfore whoos child Aungels syng Osanne
 Yf I be giltyles of this felonye
 My socour be or elles shaþ I dye 644

¶ Haue ye nat seen somtyme a pale face
 Among a prees / of hym þat hath be lad
 Toward his deth where as hym gate no grace
 And soch a colour in his face hath hade [leaf 72, back] 648
 Men myght knowe his face / that was bestade
 Among all the faces in that route
 So stant Custaunce / and loketh hir about 651

¶ O queenes lyuyng in prosperitee
 Duchesse / and ye ladies euerychone
 Haueth som rewth of her aduersitee
 An Emperous daughter stant all alone 655
 She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone
 O blode riall that stondeth in this drede
 ffer ben thy frendes at thy grete nede 658

¶ This Alla kyng hath soch compassion
 As gentle hert is fulfilled of pitee
 That from his eyen ran þe water down
 Now hastely do fecche a boke koth he 662
 [This page, Egerton 2726.]

And yf this knyght wolt swere how þat she
This womman slough yitte wolt we vs averse
Whom that we wolt that shaft be our Iustise 665

¶ A breton boke writen with Ewangeles
was fette / and on this boke he sware anon
She gilty was / and in the mene whiles
An hand hym smote / vp-on the nek boon 669
That doun he fel at ones as a stoon
And both his yen brast out of his face
In sight of every body in that place 672

¶ A voys was herd in general audience
And seid þou hast disclaundred giltyles
The doughter of holy chirch in high presence
Thus haast þou doon / and yitte hold I my pece 676
Of this mervail agast was all the prece
As mased folk þey stoden everychone
ffor drede of wreche saue Custaunce allone 679

¶ Grete was the drede / and eke þe repentaunce
Of hem that haden wrong suspescion
Vp-on this sely Innocent Custaunce
And for this mater in conclusion 683
And by Custaunce mediacion
The kyng and many another in þat place
Conuerte was thanked be Cristes grace 686

¶ This fals knyght was slayn for his vntreuth
By Iugement of Alla hastely [leaf 78]
And yitte Custaunce hade of his deth grete reuth
And after this Ihesu of his mercy 690
Made Alla wedden full solempnely
This holy maiden / that is so bright and shene
And thus hath crist ymade Custaunce a quene 693

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

¶ But who was woofuþ yf I shaþ nat lye
 Of this weddyng but Donegild and no moo
 The kynges moder' fuþ of tyrannye
 Hir thought hir cursed hert brast a-two 697
 She wold nat hir son had doon so
 Hir thought a despit / that he shold take
 So straunge a creatue / vn to-his make 700

¶ Me list nat of the chaffe ne of the stree
 Maken so long a tale as of the corn
 What shold I tell of þe rialtee
 At the mariage / or which cours goþ byforn 704
 Who bloweth in a trump or in an horn
 The fruyt of euery tale is for to sey
 They ete / drank / daunce syng and pley. 707

¶ They goon to bed / as it was skiþ and right/
 ffor though þat wyfes ben fuþ holy thynges
 They most take in pacience at nyght [Egerton ends]
 Swiche maner necessities / as ben plesynges [Dd. begins,
 To folk / that han I-wedded hem / with rynges leaf 62.]
 And ley a lite / here holynesse a-syde
 As for the tyme / it may no bet betide 714

¶ On hire he gat / a knaue child a-noone
 And to a Busshoþ / and his Constable eke
 he tok his wyf to kepe / whan he is gone
 To Scotlondward / his foomen for to seke 718
 Now fair Custaunce / þat is so humble & meke
 So longe is goon with childe / to that stille
 She halt hire chaumbre / abidyng cristes wyll 721

¶ The tyme is come / a knaue child she beer
 Mauricius at the fontstone / they him calle
 This Constable / doþ forth come / a messanger
 And wroot vn-to his kynge / þat cleped was Alle 725

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

how that this blisful tidyng / is byfalle
 And othere tidyngges / spedeful for to seye
 he hath the lettre / and forth he goth his weye 728

¶ This messenger / to doon hise auantage
 Vn-to the kynges moder / rideth swithe
 And salueth hire faire / in his langage
 Madame quod he / ȝe may be glad and blithe 732
 And thanketh god / an hundred thousand siþe
 My lady Queene hath child / withoute doute
 To ioye & blisse / to al this regne a-boute 735

¶ I lo heere the lettres / seeled of this thyng
 That I moot beere / with al the hast I may
 If ȝe wol aught / vn-to ȝoure sone the kyng
 I am ȝoure seruauant / bothe nyght and day 739
 Donegilde answered / as now at this tyme / nay
 But heere al nyght / I wol thow take thy reest
 To-morwe wol I sey thee / what me leest 742

¶ This messenger drank sadly / Ale and wyne
 And stolen were hise lettres / preuily
 Out of his box / while he slepe / as a swyne
 And countrefeted was / ful subtilly 746
 A-nother lettre / wrought ful synfully
 Vn-to the kyng / directe of this mateer
 ffro his Constable / as ȝe shuln after heer 749

¶ The lettre spak / the Queene deliyuered was
 Of so horrible / a feendliche creature
 That in the Castel / noon so hardy was
 That any while / durst there endure 753
 The moder was an Elf / be auenture
 I-comen be charmes / or by sorcerie
 And euerich man hateth / hire companye [leaf 62, back] 756

¶ Woo was this kyng / whan he this *lettre* had sayn
 But to no wyght he tolde / hise sorwes soore
 But of his owen hond / he wroot a-gayn
 Welcome the sonde of Crist / for euere more 760
 To me that am now / lerned in his loore
 lord welcome be thy lust / and thy plesaunce
 My lust I putte / al in thyn ordinaunce 763

¶ Kepeth this child / al be it foul or feyre
 And eke my wyf / vn-to myn hoom comynge
 Crist whan him list / may sende me an Eyr
 Moore agreable / than this / to my likynge 767
 This *lettre* he seeleth / pryuely wepynge
 Which to the messanger / was take soone
 And forth he goth / there is no more to done 770

¶ O Messanger fulfilled / of drunkenesse [Latin note, p. 133.]
 Stronge is thy breeth / thy lymes faltren ay
 And thow bywreyst / alle secrenesse
 Thy mind is lorn / þou ianglest as a Iay 774
 Thy face is turned / in a newe a-ray
 There dronkenesse regneth / in any route
 There is no counseil hid / with-uten doute 777

¶ O Donegild / I ne haue / noon englisshe digne
 vn-to thy malice / and thy tyrannye
 And þefore to the feild / I the resigne
 lat hym endyten / of thy traytorie 781
 ffy mannyssh fy / o nay be god I lye
 ffy feendly spirit / for I dar wel telle
 Though þou heere walk / thy spirit is in helle 784

¶ This messanger cometh / fro the kyng a-gayn
 And at the kynges modres court / he light
 And she was of this messanger / ful fayn
 And pleased him / in al that euere she myght 788

he drank / and wel his girdel vnderpight
 he slepeth and he snorteth / in his gyse
 Al nyght / to the sonne gan aryse 791

¶ Eft weere hise *lettres* / stolen euerychone
 And countrefeted *lettres* / in thys wyse
 The kyng comaundeth / his Constable a-noon
 vp peyne of hangyng / and on hey Iuyse 795
 That he ne shulde suffren / in no wyse
 Custaunce with-Inne his regne / for to abide
 Three dayes / and o quarter of a tyde 798

¶ But in the same ship / as he hire fonde
 hire and hire ȝonge sone / and al hire gere
 He shulde putte / and croude hire fro the londe [leaf 63]
 And charge hire / she neuere eft come there 802
 O my Custaunce / wel may thy goost haue feere
 And slepyng in thy dreem / ben in penaunce
 Whan Donegild cast / al this ordinaunce 805

¶ This Messenger on morwe / whan he woke
 vn-to the Castel / al the next way
 And to the Constable / he the *lettre* tooke
 And whan that he / this pytous *lettre* say 809
 fful ofte he seide alas / and weilawey
 lord Crist quod he / how may this world endure
 So ful of synne / is many a creature 812

¶ O myghty god / if that it be thy wylle
 Sithe þou art rightful Iuge / how may it be
 That þow wolt suffren / Innocenteȝ to spille
 And wykked folk regnen / in prosperitee 816
 O goode Custaunce / alas so woo is me
 That I mot be thy turmentour / or deye
 On shames deeth / there is noon other weye 819

¶ Wepen bothe ȝonge & olde / in al that place
 Whan that the kyng / this cursed *lettre* sente
 And Custaunce / with a deedly pale face
 The fierthe day / toward hire ship she went 823
 But nathelees / she taketh in good entent
 The wyl of Crist / and kneled on the stronde
 She seide lord / ay welcome be thy sonde 826

¶ He that me kepte / fro the fals blame
 Why I was on the lond / a-monges ȝow
 he can me kepe / fro harme & eke fro shame
 In salt see / al-though I se nought how 830
 As stronge as euere he was / he is ȝet now
 In him troost I / and in his moder deere
 That is to me my seyl / and eke my steere 833

¶ hire litel child / lay wepyng in hire arme
 And knelynge pytously / to him she seyde
 Pees litel sone / I wol do the noon harme
 With þat hire couerchief / ouer hire hede she brayde 837
 And ouer his litel eyen / she it leyde
 And in hire arm / she lulleth it ful fast
 And in-to heuene / hire eyen vp she cast 840

¶ Moder quod she / and mayde bright Marie
 Soth is / that thurgh wommannes eggement
 Mankynde was lorn / and dampned ay to deye
 ffor whiche thy child / was on þe croys I-rent 844
 Thy blisseful eyen / saw al this turmont [leaf 68, back]
 Thanne is there / no comparisone bytwene
 Thy woo / and any woo / man may sustene 847

¶ Thow saw thy child I-slayn / biforȝ thyne eyen
 And ȝet now lyueth / my litel child *parfay*
 Now lady bright / to whom alle wooful cryen
 Thow glorie of wommanhode / þou faire may 851

Thow hauene of refuyt / bright sterre of day
 Rewe on my childe / that of thy gentillesce
 Rewest on euery reuful / in distresse 854

¶ O litel child / allas what is thy gilt
 That neuere wroughtest synne / as ȝet pardee
 Why wyl thyn fader / han the spilt
 O mercy deere Constable / quod she 858
 As lat my litel child / dwelle heere with the
 And if þou darst nouȝt / sauē him fro blame
 So kisse him oones / in his fadres name 861

¶ There-with she loked bakward / to the londe
 And seide farewel husbonde / routhelees
 And vp she rist / and walketh doun the stronde
 Toward the ship / hire folweth al the prees 865
 And euere she preyeth / hire child / to hold his pees
 And takith hire leue / and with an hol entent
 She blissed hire / and in-to shipe she went 868

¶ Vetailled was the ship / it is no drede
 habundauntly / for hire / ful longe space
 And othere necessities / that shulde nede
 She had I-now / heried be goddes grace 872
 for wynd & weder / almyghty god purchase
 And brynge hire home / I kan no betyr seye
 But in the See / she dryueth forth hire weye 875

[PART III.]

Alla the kyng / cometh hom sone after this ¶ Tercia
 vn-to his Castel / of the whiche I tolde pars.
 And asketh where his wyf / and his child is
 The Constable gan / a-boute his hert colde 879

And pleynty al the maner / he him tolde
 As þe han herd / I kan telle it no better
 And sheweth the kyng / his seel & his lettre 882

¶ And seide / lord / as þe comaunded me
 vp payne of deeth / so haue I doon certeyne
 This Messenger turmented was / til he
 Most byknowe / and tellen plat and pleyn 886
 ffro nyght to nyght / in what place he had leyn
 And thus by wytte / and subtil enquerynge [leaf 64]
 Imagyned was / by whom this harm gan sprynge 889

¶ The hond was knowe / that the lettre wroot
 And al the venym / of this cursed dede
 But in what wyse / certeynly I not
 The effect is this / that Alla oute of dreede 893
 his moder slough / that mouñ men pleynty reede
 ffor that she traytour was / to hire ligeaunce
 Thus endith Donegild / with myschaunce 896

¶ The sorwe that this Alla / nyght and day
 Maketh for his wyf / and for his child also
 There is no tonge / that it telle may
 But now wol I / vn-to Custaunce go 900
 That fleteth in the See / in payne and woo
 ffyue þer and more / as lyked cristes sonde
 That hire shiþ approched / vn-to the londe 903

¶ vnder an hethen Castel / at the last
 Of which the name / in my text / nouȝt I fynde
 Custaunce and eke hire child / the see vp cast
 Almyghty god / that saued al mankynde 907
 haue oon Custaunce / & on hire child sum mynde
 That fallen is / in hethen hand eft-sonne
 In poynt to spille / as I shal telle þow sone 910

¶ Doun fro the Castel / cometh there many a wyght
 To gauren on this ship / and on Custaunce
 But shortly from the Castel / on a nyght
 The lordes styward / god ȝeue him myschaunce 914
 A theef þat had reneyed / oure creaunce
 Come in-to the ship allone / and seid he shulde
 hire lemman be / wheiþer so she wolde or nolde 917

¶ Woo was this wrecched womman / thoȝ bygon
 hire child cryed / and she cryed pitously
 But blisful Mary halþ / hire right a-noon
 ffor with here strogelyng / wel and myghtily 921
 The thef fel ouer bord / al sodeynly
 And in the See he dreynt / for vengeaunce
 And thus hath Crist / vnwemmed kept Custaunce 924

¶ O foule lust of luxurie / lo thyn ende [*Latin note, p. 133.*]
 Nat oonly that þou feyntest / mannes mynde
 But verrailly thow wold / his body shende
 The ende of thy werk / or of thy lustes blynde 928
 Is compleynynge / how many oon / may men fynde
 That nought for werk / sumtyme but for the entent
 To doon this synne / ben outhur slayn or shent 931

¶ How may this weyke womman / han this strengthe
 hire to defende / a-geyn this renegat [*leaf 64, back*]
 O Goliath / vn-mesurable of lengthe
 How myght Dauyd / make the so mat 935
 So ȝonge / and of armure so desolat
 How durst he loke / vp-on thy dreedful face
 Wel may men seen / it was but goddes grace 938

¶ Who ȝaf Iudith / corage or hardynesse
 To slen him Olyfern / in his tent
 And to delyueren out / of wretchednesse
 The peple of god / I sey for this entent 942

That right as god / spirit / of vigour sent
 To hem / and saued hem / out of meschaunce
 So sent he myght and vigour / to Custaunce 945

¶ fforth goth hir ship / thurghout the narugh mouth
 Of Iubaltare and Septe / dryuyng alway
 Sumtyme west / & sumtyme North & South
 And sumtyme Est / ful many a wery day 949
 Til Cristes moder / blessed be she ay
 hath shapen thurgh / hire endles goodnesse
 To make an ende / of al hire heuynesse 952

¶ Now lat vs stynt / of Custaunce but a throwe
 And speke of the Romayn / Emperour
 That out of Surrye / hath by lettres knowe
 The slaughtre of Cristene folk / and dishonour 956
 Doon to his doughter / by a fals traytour
 I mene the cursed wykked / Soudanesse
 That at the feest / let sleen bothe moore & lesse 959

¶ ffor which this Emperour / hath sent a-noon
 his senatour / with roial ordinaunce
 And othere lordes / god woot many oon
 On Surryens / to taken heigh vengeaunce 963
 They brennen / sleen / and brynge hem to meschaunce
 fful many a day / but shortly this is the ende
 homward to Rome / they shepen hem to wende 966

¶ This senatour / repaireth with victorie
 To Romeward / seillynge ful roially
 And mette the ship dryuyng / as seith the storie
 In which Custaunce sitteth / ful pytously 970
 No thyng knew he / what she was / ne why
 She was in swich aray / ne she nyl sey
 Of hire estate / though she shulde dey 973

¶ He bryngeth hire to Rome / and to his wyf
 he ȝaf hire / and hire ȝonge sone also
 And with the senatour / she lad hire lif
 Thus can oure lady / bryngen out of woo [leaf 65] 977
 Wooful Custaunce / and many a-nother moo
 And longe tyme dwelled she / in that place
 In holy werkes euere / as was hire grace 980

¶ The senatours wyf / hire Aunte was
 But for al that / she knew hire neuere the moore
 I wyl no lengere tary / in this caas
 But to the kyng Alla / which I spak of ȝore 984
 That wepeth for his wyf / and sygheth sore
 I wyl returne / and lete I wyl Custaunce
 vnder the Senatours / gouernaunce 987

¶ Kyng Alla / which / þat hath / his moder slayn
 vp-on a day fel / in swich repentaunce
 That if I shortly tellen shal / and pleyñ
 To Rome he cometh / to resceyue his penaunce 991
 And putte him / in the Popes ordinaunce
 In heigh and low / and ihesu crist bysought
 ffor-ȝeue hise wykked werkes / that he wrought 994

¶ The fame a-noon / thurgh-out the toun is born
 how Alla kyng / shal come on pilgrymage
 By herbegours / that wenten him byforn
 ffor which the Senatour / as it was vsage 998
 Rood him a-ȝein / and many of his lynage
 As wel to shewen / his heigh magnificence
 As to doon / any kyng / a reuerence 1001

¶ Gret cher maketh / this noble Senatour
 To kyng Alla / and he to hym also
 Eueryche of hem / doth other gret honour
 And so byfeh / that with-inne a day or twoo 1005

M

This Senatour is / to kyng Alla goo
 To feeste / and shortly / if I shal nat lye
 Custaunces sone / went in his companye 1008

¶ Somme men wold seyn / that at the request of Custaunce
 This senatour hath lad / this child to feste
 I may nat tellen / euery circumstaunce
 Be as be may / there was he at the leste 1012
 But soth is / that / at his modres heeste
 Byforñ Alla / duryng the metes space
 The child stood / lokyng in the kynges face 1015

¶ This Alla kyng / hath of the child greet wonder
 And to the Senatour / he seide a-noon
 Whoos is this fair child / that stondeth ȝonder
 I not quod he / by god / and by seynt Iohn 1019
 A moder he hath / but fader hath he noon [leaf 65, back]
 That I of woot / but shortly in a stounde
 he told Alla / how that child was founde 1022

¶ But god woot / quod this senatour also
 So vertuous a lyuere / in al my lyf
 Ne saw I neuere / as she / ne herd of moo
 Of worldly wommen / mayden ne of wyf 1026
 I dar wel seyn / hire had leuere a knyf
 Thurgh-out hire breest / than be a womman wykke
 There is no man / coude bryng hire to that prykke 1029

¶ Now was this child / as lyke vn-to Custaunce
 As possible is / a creature for to be
 This Alla hath the face / in remembraunce
 Of Dame Custaunce / and ther-oon mused he 1033
 If that the childes moder / were ought she
 That is his wyf / and preuily he sight
 And sped him fro the table / that he myght 1036

¶ Parfoi thought he / fantom is in myn heede
 I ought deme / of skylful Iugement
 That in the salt See / my wife is dede
 And afterward he mad / his argument 1040
 What woot I / if that Crist haue hidder sent
 My wyf by See / as wel as he hire lent
 To my contree / from thens that she went 1043

¶ And after noon / hom with the senatour
 Gooth Alla / for to seen this wonder chaunce
 This Senatour doth Alla / greet honour
 And hastily he sent / after Custaunce 1047
 But trosteth wel / hire list nat to daunce
 Whan þat she wyst / wherfore / was that sond
 vn-ethe vp-on hire feet / she myght stond 1050

¶ Whan Alla saugh his wyf / faire he hire grette
 And wepte / þat it was / reuthe for to se
 ffor at the first looke / he on hire sette
 he knew wel weraily / that it was she 1054
 And she for sorwe / as dombe stant / as tree
 So was hire hert shette / in hir distresse
 Whan she remembred / his vnkynnesse 1057

¶ Twyes she swoughned / in his owen sight
 he wepeth / and him excuseth pitously
 Now god quod he / and his halwes bright
 So wysly oon my soule / as haue mercy 1061
 That of þoure harm / as gillees am I
 As is Maurice my sone / like þoure face
 Elles the fend / me fecche out of this place 1064

¶ Longe was the sobbyng / and the bittere payne [leaf 66]
 Er that here wooful hertes / myghten sese
 Greet was the pitee / for to heere hem pleyne
 Thurgh which pleyntes / gan here woo encrease 1068

I prey 3ow Alla / my labour to relese
 I may not telle my woo / vn-til to-morwe
 I am so wery / for to speke of sorwe 1071

¶ But finally / whan the sothe is wist
 That Alla / giltles was / of hire woo
 I trowe an / C / tymes / ben they kist
 And swich a blisse is there / be-twix hem two 1075
 That saue the ioye / that lasteth euere moo
 There is noon lyke / that any creature
 Hath seen / or shal / while the world may endure 1078

¶ Tho preyede she hire housbonde / mekely
 In releef / of hire longe / pytous peyn
 That he wold prey hire fader / specialy
 That of his mageste / he wold enclyn 1082
 To vouchesaf / som day / with him to dyne
 She preyed him eke / he wold by no wey
 vn-to hire fader / no word of hire sey 1085

¶ Somme men wold seyn / how that the child Maurice
 Dooth this message / vn-to this Emperour
 But as I gesse / Alla was nouzt so nyce
 To hym that was / of so soleyn honour 1089
 As he that is / of Cristene folk the flour
 Sent ony child / but it is bete to deme
 He went him self / and so it may wel seme 1092

¶ This Emperour / hath graunted / gentilly
 To come to dyner / as he him bysought
 And wel reede I / he loked besily
 vp-on this child / and on his doughter þought 1096
 Alla gooth to his Inne / and as him ought
 Arrayed for this feeste / in euery wyse
 As ferforth / as his conyng may suffice 1099

¶ The morwe cam / and Alla gan him dresse
 And eke his wyf / this Emperour to mete
 And forth they ryde / in ioye and in gladnesse
 And whan she saw / hire fader in the strete 1103
 She lightȝ down / and fallith him to fete
 ffader quod she / ȝoure ȝong child Custaunce
 Is now ful clene / out of ȝoure remembraunce 1106

¶ I am ȝoure doughter / Custaunce / quod she
 That whilom / ȝe han sent / in-to Surrye [leaf 66, back]
 It am I fader / that in the salt See
 Was put allone / and dampned for to deye 1110
 Now good fader / mercy I ȝow crye
 Send me nomore / vn-to noon hethenes
 But thanketh my lord / heere / of his kyndnes 1113

¶ Who can the pytous / ioye / tellen alle
 Be-twixe hem three / syn they be thus I-mette
 But of my tale / make an ende I shalle
 The day gooth fast / I wyl no lengere lette 1117
 This glad folk / to dyner they hem sette
 In ioye & blisse / at mete I lete hem dwelle
 A / M^t / fold / moore than I can telle 1120

¶ This child Maurice / was sithen Emperour
 Mad by the Pope / and lyued cristenly
 To cristes chirche / he dide gret honour
 But I lete al / this story passen by 1124
 Of Custaunce is my tale / specialy
 In the olde Romaine gestes / mounȝ men fynde
 Maurices lyf / I bere it nat in mynde 1127

¶ The kyng Alla / whan he his tyme sey
 With his Custaunce / his holy wyf so swete
 To Englonȝ ben they come / the right wey [Latin note, p. 183.]
 Where as they lyue / in ioye and in quiete 1131

But litel while it lasteth / I ȝow hete
 Ioye of this world / for tyme wol nat a-byde
 ffro day to nyght / it chaungeth as the tyde 1134

¶ Who leued euere / in swich delyt / oo / day [Latin note, p. 133.]
 That him ne meened / other conscience
 Or ire / or talent / or som maner affray
 Enuye / or pryde / or passion / or offence 1138
 I ne seye / but for this ende / this sentence
 That litel while / in ioye or in plesaunce
 lasteth the blisse / of Alla / with Custaunce 1141

¶ ffor deth that taketh / of hey & lowe his rente
 Whan passed was a ȝere / euene as I gesse
 Out of this world / this kyng Alla he hente
 ffor whom Custaunce / hath ful gret heuynesse 1145
 Now lat vs preye to god / his soule blisse
 And Dame Custaunce / fynaly to seye
 Toward the toun of Rome / gooth hire weye 1148

¶ To Rome is come / this holy creature
 And fyndeth hire frendes / hole and sounde
 Now is she skaped / al hire auenture 1151
 And whan that she / her fader / hath I-founde [leaf 67]
 Doun on hire knees / falleth she to grounde
 Wepyng for tendirnesse / in hert blithe
 She herieth god / an hundred thousand sithe 1155

¶ In vertue & holy / almes dede
 They lyuen alle / and neuere a-sonder wende
 Til deeth departeth hem / this lif they lede
 And fareth now wel / my tale is at an ende 1159
 Now ihesu crist / that of his myght may sende
 Ioye after woo / gouerne vs / in his grace
 And kepe vs alle / that ben in this place. ¶ Amen quod
 wyttōn.

¶ Hic finitur fabula legis periti /

[on leaf 67]

¶ Incipit prologus vxoris de Bathe

Experience / though noon auctoritee
 Were in this world / is right I-now for me
 To speken of woo / that is in mariage
 ffor lordynges / syn I twelue ȝer was of age 4
 Thanked be god / that is eterne on lyue
 husbondes at the chirche doore / haue I had fyue
 If I so often myght / han wedded be
 And alle weren worthy men / in here degree 8
 But me was told / nought longe agon is
 That sithen Crist / ne went neuere but oonys
 To weddyng / in the Cane of Galilee
 That by the same ensauple / taught he me 12
 That I ne wedded / shuld be but ones
 loo herkene which / a sharȝ word / for the nones
 Beside a welle / ihesus god and man
 Spak in repreue / of the Samaritan 16
 Thow hast I-had / fyue husbondes quod he
 And that ilke man / which that now hath the
 Is nat thyn husbonde / thus seide he certeyn
 What that he ment ther-by / I can nought seyn 20
 But that I aske why / that the fife man
 Was noon husbonde / to the Samaritan
 how many myght she haue / in mariage
 ȝet herd I neuere / tellen in myn age 24

vp-on this noumbre / diffinicion
 Men may deuyne / and glosen vp and douñ
 But wel I woot / expresse / with-outen lye
 God bad vs for to wexe / and multiplie 28
 That gentil text / can I wel vnderstonde [leaf 67, back]
 Eke wel I woot he seide / þat myn husbonde
 Shuld leete fader and moder / and take to me
 But of no noumbre / mencione mad he 32
 Of Bygamy / or of Octogamy
 Why shulde men thanne / speke of it velanye
 loo heere the wyse kyng / Salamon
 I trowe he hadde / wyues moo than oon 36
 As wolde god / it leueful were to me
 To be refresshed / half so ofte as he
 Which a gift of god / had he for alle his wyues
 No man hath swich / þat now on lyue is 40
 God wot this noble kyng / as to my wytte
 The first nyght / had many a mery fitte
 With ech of hem / so wel was him on lyue
 Blessed be god / that I haue wedded fyue 44
 Of whiche / I haue pyked out the beste [6 spurious lines]
 Bothe of here nether purs / and of here cheste [1 over 'diuerse
werkes' dotted
out]
 Diuerse scoles / maken parfyt¹ clerkes
 And diuerse practyk in many² sondry werkes [2 a dotted out]
 Maken / the werkman parfyt³ / sekirly [3 man dotted out]
 Of fyue husbondes scoleiying / am I
 Welcome the sixte / whan þat euere he shal 45
 ffor syn I wol nat kepe me / chast in al
 Whan myn husbonde / is fro the world goon
 Sum cristene man / shal wedde me a-noon 48
 ffor thanne the Apostle / seith þat I am free
 To wedde a goddes halue / where it liketh me
 he seith / that to be wedded / is no synne.
 Bet is to be wedded / than brynne 52
 What rekketh me / though folk sey vylenye
 Of shrewed lameth / and his bygamy
 I woot wel Abraham / was an holy man
 And Iacob eke / as fer as euer y can 56
 And ich of hem had wyues / moo than twoo
 And many a-nother / holy man also
 Where can ye seen / in any maner age
 That heye god defended / mariage 60

By expresse word / I prey 3ow telleth me
 Or where comaunded he / virginite
 I woot as wel as 3e / it is no drede
 The Appostel whan he speketh / of maydenhede 64
 he seide that precept / had he ther-of noon
 Men moun counseile / a womman to ben oon
 But counseillynge / is no comaundement
 He putte it / in oure owen Iugement / [leaf 68] 68
 ffor had god comaunded / maydenheede
 Than had he dampned / weddyng with the dede
 And certes if there were / no seede I-sowe
 virginite than / wher-of shuld it growe 72
 Poule durst nat comaunden / at the leste
 A thyng of which / his maister 3af noon heeste
 The dart is sette vp / for virginitee
 Cacche who so may / who renneth best lat se 76
 But this word is nat take / of euery wyght
 But there as god wol 3eue it / of his myght
 I wot wel that the Appostel / was a mayde
 But nathelees / though that he wroot or sayde 80
 he wolde þat euery wyght / were swich as he.
 Al nys but counseile / to virginitee
 And for to be a wyf / he 3af me leeue
 Of indulgence / so is noon repreue 84
 To wedde me / if that my make deye
 With-oute excepcione / of bygamy
 Al were it good / no womman for to touche
 he ment in his bed / or in his couche 88
 ffor peril is / bothe tow and fyr / to assemble
 3e knowe what this ensauple / may resemble
 This is al and sum / he held virginitee
 More parfyt / than weddyng in freeletee 92
 ffreelte clepe I / but if that he and she
 Wold here lyues lede / al in chastitee
 I graunte it wel / I haue noon envye
 Though maydenhede / preferre bygamy 96

It liketh hem to be clene / in body and goost
 Of myn estat / I wol nat maken boost
 ffor wel 3e knowe / a lord in his houshold
 Ne hath nat euery vessel / al of gold 100
 Summe ben of tree / and don here lord seruyse
 God clepeth folk / to hym in sundry wyse
 And euerich hath of god / a propre 3ifte
 Som this / som that / as þat him liketh shifte 104
 virginite is / a gret perfeccion
 And continence eke / with deuocion
 But crist / that of perfeccion / is welle
 Ne bad nat euery wyght / he shuld selle 108
 Al þat he had / and 3eue it to the poore
 And in swich wyse / folwe him and his foore
 he spak to hem / that wold leue partitly
 And lordynges be 3oure leue / that am not I 112
 I wol bestowe / the flour of al myn age [leaf 63, back]
 In the actes / and in the fruyt of mariage
 Telle me also / in what conclusionne
 Were membres made / of generacionne 116
 And of so parfyt wyse / a wyght I-wrought
 Trosteth right wel / they were nat made for nought
 Glose who so wele / and sey bothe vp and down
 That they weren I-made / for purgacionne 120
 Of vryne / and oure bothe thynges smale
 Weren eke to knowe / a femele fro a male
 And for noon other cause / sey 3e noo
 The experience wot wel / it is nat so 124
 So that the Clerkes / be nat with me wroth
 I seye this / that they maked be / for bothe
 This is to seyn / bothe for office & for ease
 Of engendure / there we nat god displeese 128
 Why shulde men ellis / in here bookes sette
 That men shal 3elde / to his wyf hire dette
 Now wher-with shuld he make / his paiement
 If that he ne vsed / his seely Instrument 132

Than were they made / vp-on a creature
 To purge vryne / and eke for engendrure
 But I sey nought / that euery wyght is holde
 That hath swich harneys / as I to 3ow tolde 136
 To gon and vsen hem / in engendrure
 Than shulde men take / of chastitee no cure
 Crist was a mayde / and shapen as a man
 And many a Seynt / sithe þat the world bygan 140
 3et lyued they euere / in parfyt chastitee
 I nyl envye / no virginitee
 Lat hem be breed / of pured whete seede
 And lat vs wyues / hote barly breede 144
 And 3et with barly breed / Mark telle can
 Oure lord ihesu / refresshed many a man
 In swich estat / as god hath cleped vs
 I wol perseuere / I nam nat precious 148
 In wyfhode wyl I vse / myn Instrument
 As freely as my makere / hath it sent
 If I be daungerous / god 3eue me sorwe
 Myn husbonde shal it haue / bothe eue & morwe 152
 Whan that him liste / come forth & paie his dette
 An husbonde wol I haue / I wol nat lette
 Which shal be bothe / my dettour and my thral
 And haue his tribulacion / with-al 156
 Vp-on his fleessh / while that I am his wyf [leaf 69]
 I haue the power / duryng al my lyf
 vp-on his propre body / and nat he
 Right thus the Apostel / told it vn-to me 160
 And bad oure husbondes / for to loue vs wele
 Al this sentence / me liketh euerydele
 ¶ ¶ vp sterte the Pardoner / and that a-noon
 Now dame quod he / by god & by Seynt Iohn 164
 3e ben a noble prechour / in this caas
 I was aboute to wedde a wyf / Allas
 What shulde I bye it / on my flessch so deere
 3et had I leuere / wedde noon to 3ere 168

A-byde *quod* she / my tale is nat bygonne
 Nay þou shalt drynken / of a-nother tonne
 Er that I go / shal sauer wers than Ale
 Whan that I haue told the / forth my tale 172
 Of tribulacione / that is in mariage
 Of which I am expert / in al myn age
 This is to seyn / my self hath ben the whippe
 Than maist þou chese / whider þat thou wylt sippe 176
 Of thilk Tonne / that I wyl a-broche
 By war of it / or þou to ny approche
 ffor I shal telle ensaumples / moo than ten
 Who so that nyl / be war / by othere men 180
 By him shuln othere men / corrected be
 Theise same wordes / wryteth Protholomee ¶ Qui per alios non
 Rede in his Almagest / and take it there *corrigitar*
 Dame I wold preye 3ow / if 3oure wyl were *Alii per ipsum corriguntur*
 Seide this Pardoner / as 3e bygan 185
 Telleth forth 3oure tale / & spareth for no man
 And techeth vs 3onge men / of 3oure practike
 Gladly *quod* she / syn that it may 3ow lyke 188
 But that I praye / to alle this companye
 If that I speke / after my fantasye
 As taketh it nought a gref / of that I seye
 ffor myn entent is nat / but for to pleye 192
 Now Sires than shal I / tellen 3ow forth my tale
 As euere mot I / drynken wyn or Ale
 I shal seye soth / the husbondes that I had
 As thre of hem weren goode / & twoo weren bad 196
 The thre of hem weren goode / and riche & olde
 Vn-ethe myghten they / the statut holde
 In which that they were bounden / vn-to me
 3e wot wel what I mene / of this pardee 200
 As god helpe me / I laughē whan that I thynke [leaf 69, back]
 how pitously a nyght / I made hem swynke
 But be my fey / I tolde of it no store
 They had me 3euē / here lond and here tresore 204

Me neded nat / do lengere diligence
 To wynne here loue / or do hem reuerence
 They loued me so wel / by god a-boue
 That I ne told / no deynte of here loue 208
 A wys womman / wyl besy hire euere in oon
 To geten hire loue / there as she hath noon
 But syn I had hem / holly in myn hand
 And syn that they / had ȝeue me al here land 212
 what shulde I take kepe / hem for to please
 But if it were for my profyt / and myn eese
 I sette hem so a werk / be my fey
 That many a nyght / they songen weylawey 216
 The bacon was nat fet / for hem as I trowe
 That summe men han in Essex / at Donmowe
 I gouerned hem so wel / after my lawe
 That iche of hem / ful blisful was and fawe 220
 To brynge me gay thynges / fro the feyre
 They were ful glad / when I spak to hem fayre
 ffor god it woot / I chidde hem spitously
 Now herkeneth how / I bar me proprely 224
 ȝe wyse wyues / that can vnderstonde
 Thus shuld ȝe speke / & bere hem wrong on honde
 ffor half so boldly / there can no man
 Sweren and lyen / as a womman can ¶ Verum est 228
 I sey nat this / be wyues that ben wyse
 But if it be / whan they hem mys a-vyse
 A wys wyf shal / if that she can hire good
 Bere him on honde / that the kow is wood 232
 And take wytnesse / of hire owen mayde
 Of hire assent / but herkeneth how I sayde
 Sire olde kaynard / is this thyn array
 why is my neyȝebores wyf / so gay 236
 She is honoured / ouer alle there she goth
 I sitte at hom / I haue no thrifty cloth
 what dost thou / at my neyȝebores hous
 Is she so fair / art thou so ameraus 240

what rovne ȝe with oure mayden / benedicite
 Sire olde lecchour / late thyne iapes be
 [An]d if that I haue / a gosshiþ or a freende
 [wit]houten gilt / ȝe chiden as a fende 244
 If that I walke or rome / vn-to hir hous [leaf 70]
 Thow comest hom / as dronken as a Mous
 And prechest on thy benche / with euele preef
 Thow seist to me / it is a gret myschief 248
 To wedde a poore womman / for costage
 And if that she be riche / of heigh parage
 Than seist thow / that it is a turmentrie
 To suffre hire pride / and hire malacolie 252
 And if that she be fair / thow verray knaue
 Thow seist that every holour / wol hire haue
 She may no while / in chastite a-byde
 That is assayled / vp-on eche a syde 256
 Thow seist somme folk / desiren vs for richesse
 Somme for oure shap / and somme for oure fairnesse
 And sum for she can / either synge or daunce
 And sum for gentillesse / and daliaunce 260
 Sum for hire hondes / and hire armes smale
 Thus goth al to the deuele / by thy tale
 Thow seist men moun nat kepe / a castel wal
 It may so longe / assailed ben / ouer al 264
 And if that she be foul / thow seist that she
 Coueyteth every man / that she may se
 ffor as a spaynel / she wol on him lepe
 Til that she fynde sum man / hire to chepe 268
 Ne noon so grey goos / goth there in the lake
 As seist þou / wyl be with-uten a make
 And seist it is / an hard thyng for to welde
 A thyng þat no man wyl / his thankes helde 272
 Thus seist þou lorel / whan thow gost to bedde
 And that no wyse man / nedeth for to wedde
 Ne no man that entendeth / vn-to heuen
 with wylde thundir dynt / and fry leuen 276

Mote thy welked nekke / be to-broke
 Thow seist that droppying houses / & eke smoke
 And chidyng wyues / maken men to flee
 Out of hire owen houses / a benedicite 280
 what eilith swich an olde man / to chide
 Thow seist we wyues / wyln oure vices hide
 Til we be fast / and thanne we wol hem shewe
 wel may this be / a prouerbe of a shrewe 284
 Thow seist that Oxen / Assen / Hors and houndes
 They ben assayed / at diuerse stoundes
 Basyns / lauours / or that men hem bye
 Spones stoles / and al swiche husbondrye [leaf 70, back] 288
 And so ben pottes / clothes and array
 But men of wommen / maken noon assay
 Til they ben wedded / olde doted shrewe
 And thanne seist pou / we wol oure vices shewe 292
 Thow seist also / that it displeseth me
 But if þat þou wylt preyse / my beaute
 And but thow poure / alwey vp-on my face
 And clepe me fair dame / in euery place 296
 And but thow make a feest / on thilke day
 That I was born / and make me fressh and gay
 And but thow do / to my norice honour
 And to my chaumberer / with-Inne my boure 300
 And to my fadres folk / and hise allies
 Thus seist pou olde barel / ful of lyes
 And ȝet of oure Apprentys / Iankyn
 ffor his crispe heer shynyng / as gold fyn 304
 And for he squyereth me / vp and down
 ȝet hast þou caught / a fals suspencion
 I wol him nought / though þou were ded to-morwe
 But telle me þis / why / hidest thou with sorwe 308
 The keyes of thy chest / a-wey fro me
 It is my good / as wel as thyn / parde
 what wenest thou / to make an Idiote of oure dame
 Now by that lord / that cleped is Seynt Iame 312

Thow shalt nat bothe / though þat þou were wood
 Be maistre of my body / and of my good
 That oon þou shalt for-gon / maugre thyne eyen
 what nedeth the of me / to enqueren & spyen 316
 I trowe þou woldest lokke me / in thy cheste
 Thow shuldest seye good wyf / go where the liste
 Taketh þoure disport / I wol nat leue no tales
 I knowe þow for a trewe wyf / dame Alys 320
 we loue no man / thak taketh kep on charge
 where þat we goo / we wol be at oure large
 Of alle men / I-blessed mot he be
 The wyse Astrologien / Dan Protholomee 324
 That seith this prouerbe / in his almagest
 Of alle men / his wysdom is heyest
 That rekketh nat / who hath the world in honde
 By this prouerbe / þou shalt vnderstonde 328
 haue thow I-now / what thar the rekke or care
 how merily / that othere folkes fare
 ffor certes olde dotard / be þour leue
 3e shuln haue queynte right I-now / at eeue [leaf 71] 332
 He is to gret a nygard / that wol werne
 A man to light a candele / at his lanterne
 he shal haue / neuere the lasse light / pardee
 haue thow I-now / the thar nat pleyne thee 336
 Thow seist also / if that we make vs gay
 with clothynge / or with precious array
 That it is perile / of oure chastites
 And 3et with sorwe / þou must enforce the 340
 And seyn theise wordes / in the Aposteles name
 In habyt mad / with chastite and shame
 3e wommen / shulde apparaille þow quod he
 And nat in tressed heer / and riche perre 344
 Ns¹ peerles ne gold / ne clothes riche [1 p. for Ne]
 After thy text / ne after thy rubriche
 I wol nat werche / as meche as doth a gnat
 Thow seist als / I walke out lyke a kat 348

ffor who so wolde senge / the Cattes skyn
 Than wold the kat / dwellen in his In
 And if the kattes skyn / be slyke and gay
 She wol nat dwelle / in house half a day 352
 But forth she wol / or any day be dawed
 To shewe hire skyn / & go on Caterwawed
 This is to seyn / if I be gay sire shrewe
 I wol renne out / my borel for to shewe 356
 Sire olde foole / what helpeth the to aspyen
 Though thou preyre Argus / with his hundred eyen
 To be my wardecors / as he can best
 In feith he shal nat kepe me / but me list 360
 3et coude I make his berd / also mote I thee
 Thou seidest eke / þat there ben thynges three
 The whiche thynges / troublen al this erthe
 And that no wyght / may endure the ferthe 364
 O leue sire shrewe / Ihesus short thy lyf
 3et precest þou and seist / an hateful wyf
 I-reened is / for oon of theise meschaunces
 Beth there noone othere / resemblaunces 368
 That 3e may likne / 3oure Parables to
 But if a seely wyf / be on of thoo
 Thou likenest eke / wommanes loue to helle
 To bareyn lond / there water may nat dwelle 372
 Thou likenest it also / to wylde fyre
 The more it brenneth / the more it hath desire
 To consume euery thyng / that wol brent be
 Thou seist right as wormes / shenden a tree [leaf 71, back] 376
 Right so a wyf / destroyeth hire husbonde
 This knowen they / that ben to wyues bonde
 L ordynges / right thus / as 3e han vnderstonde
 Bar I styly / myn olde husbondes on honde 380
 That thus they seiden / in here dronkenesse
 And al was fals / but that I tok wytnesse
 On Iankyn / and on my nece also
 O lord the peyne / I did hem and the woo 384

fful giltlees / by goddes swete pyne
 ffor as an hors / I coude byte and whyne
 I coude playne / and I was in the gilt
 Or elles often tyme / I had ben spilt 388
 who so that first cometh to the Mylle / first he grynt
 I pleyned first / so was oure werre I-stynt
 They weren ful glad / to excuse hem ful blife
 Of thyng / of whiche / they gilden neuere in here lyue 392
 Of wenchis / wold I beren hem on honde
 whan that for seke / they myghit vnethes stonde
 3et tikeled I his hert / for that he
 wende / that I of him had / so gret chierte 396
 I swor that al my walkyng / out be nyght
 was for to asprien / wenchis that he dight
 vnder that colour / had I many a myrthe
 ffor al swich wyt / is 3euen vs in oure birthe 400
 Disceite / wepyng / spynnyng / god hath 3euen
 To womman kyndely / while that they moun lyuen
 And thus of on thyng / I auaunt me
 At the ende / I had the beter / in ich degree 404
 Be sleight or force / or sum maner thyng
 As by contennel murmur / and grucchyng
 Namely a bedde / there had they myschaunce
 There wold I chide / and do hem no plesaunce 408
 I wold no lengere / in the bed a-byde
 If that I felt / his arme al ouer my syde
 Til that he had mad / his raunson vn-to me
 Than wold I suffren him / to doon his nycete 412
 And perfore to euery man / this tale I telle
 Wynne who so may / for all is for to selle
 with empty hond / men moun noone haukes lure
 ffor wynnynge wold I / al his lust endure 416
 And make me / a feyned appetit
 And 3et in bacoun / had I neuere delit
 That made me / pat euere I wold hem chide
 ffor though the pope / had siten hem beside [leaf 72] 420

I wold nat spare hem / at here owen bord
 ffor be my trouthe / I quyt hem word for word
 As help me verray god / omnipotent
 Though I right now / shulde make my testament 424
 I owe hem nat a word / that it nys quytte
 I brought it so a-boute / be my wytte
 That they must zeue it vp / for the best
 Or elles had we neuere / ben in rest 428
 ffor though he loket / as a wod lyon
 3et shulde he faile / of his conclusioñ
 Than wold I sey / good lef take kepe
 how mekely loketh / wykyn oure shepe 432
 Come near my spouse / lat me ba thy cheke
 3e schulden be / al pacient and meke
 And han a swete / spiced conscience
 Sithe 3e so preche / of Iobes pacience 436
 Suffreth al-vey / syn 3e so wel can preche
 And but 3e do / certeyn we shuln 3ow teche
 That it is fair / to han a wyf in pees
 Oon of vs two / must bowen doutelees 440
 And sithe a man / is more resonable
 Than womman is / 3e must ben suffrable
 what eyleth 3ow / to grucche thus and grone
 It is for 3e wolde / han my queynte allone 444
 we take it al / lo haue it euerydele
 Petir I shrewe 3ow / but 3e loue it wele
 ffor if I wolde selle / my beal chose
 I coude walke / as fressh as any Rose 448
 But I wol kepe it / for 3oure owen toth
 3e be to blame / by god I seye 3ow soth
 Swiche maner wordes / had we on honde
 Now wol I speke / of my first husbonde 452
 ¶ My first husbonde / was a reuelour
 That is to seyn / he had a paramour
 And I was 3ong / and ful of ragerie
 Stiburne and strong / and ioly as a Pye 456

Tho coude I daunce / to an harp smale
 And synge I-wysse / as any nytynggale
 whan I had dronke / a draught of swete wyn
 Metellius the foul cherl / the swyn 460
 That with a staf / byreft his wyf hir lif
 ffor she drank wyn / though I had ben his wyf
 he shulde nat han daunted / me fro drynke
 And after wyn / on venus must I thynke 464
 ffor also siker / as cold engendereth hail
 A likerous mouth / must han a likerous tail [leaf 72, back]
 In womman vynolent / is no diffence
 This knowen lecchours / be experience 468
 But lord crist / whan that it remembreth me
 Vp-on my 3outhe / and on my Iolyte
 It tikeleth me / a-boute myn hert rote
 Vn-to this day / it dooth myn hert bote 472
 That I haue had my world / as in my tyme
 But age allas / that al wyl envenyme
 hath me byraft / my beaute and my pith
 late go fare wel / the deuele goo there-with 476
 The flour is goon / there is no more to telle
 The bren as I beest can / now mot I selle
 But yet to be right merye / wol I fonde
 ¶ Now forth to telle of my secund husbonde 480
 I sey I had / in hert greet despit
 That he of any other / had delit
 But he was quyt / be god and be Seynt Ioe
 I mad him of the same wode / a Croce 484
 Nat of my body / in no foule manere
 But certeynly / I made folk swich chere
 That in his owen grees / I mad him frie
 ffor anger / and for verrey Ielusie 488
 By god / in erthe / I was his purgatorie
 ffor whiche I hope / his soule be in glorie
 ffor god it woot / he sat ful ofte and songe
 whan that his shoo / ful bitterly him wronge 492

ffor there was no wyght / saue god and he þat wyst
 In manye wyse / how sore I him twist
 he deyed whan I come / fro Ierusalem
 And lith in graue / vnder the roode Bem 496
 Al is his tounge / nought so curious
 As was the sepulchre / of him Darius
 whiche that Appollus / wrought so sotelly
 It nys but waast / to bery him preciously 500
 lat him fare wel / god ȝeue his soule good reest
 he is now in his graue / and ded in his chest
 ¶ Now of my thridde husbonde / wol I telle
 God lat his soule / neuere come in helle 504
 And ȝet was he to me / the moost shrewe
 That fele I now on my ribbes / al by rewe
 And euere shal / vn-to myn endyng day
 But in oure bed / he was ful fressh and gay 508
 And there-with also / wel coude he me gloose ¶ Nota
 whan that he wolde / han my beal chose
 That though he had / me bete on euery bon [leaf 73]
 he coude wyne / my loue a-geyn a-noon 512
 I trowe I loued him best / for that he
 was of his loue / daungerous vn-to me
 we wommen han / if that I shal nat lye
 In this mater / a queynt fantasie 516
 Wayte what thyng / we may nat lightly haue
 Ther-after wyl we crye al day / and craue
 fforbede vs thyng / and that desiren we ¶ Nota
 Presse on vs fast / and than wol we fle 520
 with daunger oute we / al oure chaffare
 Greet prees at market / maketh dere ware
 And to gret chep / is holden at litel pris
 This knoweth euery womman / that is wys 524
 ¶ ¶ My ferthe husbonde / god his soule blisse
 which that I took / for loue & no richesse
 he somtyme was / a clerk of Oxenforde
 And had left scole / and went at hom to borde 528

with my gossyp / dwellynge in oure toun
 God haue hire soule / hire name was Alison
 She knew myn hert / and al my preuytee
 Bet than oure parisshe preest / so mot I the 532
 To hire be-wreyed I / my counseil al
 ffor had myn husbonde / pissed on a wal
 Or don a thyng / that shuld han cost his lif
 To hire / and to a-nother worthy wyf 536
 And to my Nece / whiche that I loued wel
 I wold han told / his counseil euerydel
 And so I dide ful often / god it woot
 That mad his face / ful often red and hoot 540
 ffor verray shame / and blamed him-self for he
 had told to me / so gret a preuytee
 And so byfel / that ones in a lente
 So often tymes / I to my gossip wente 544
 ffor euere 3et / I loued to be gay
 And for to walke / in March / Aprill & May
 ffro hous to hous / to here sondry tales
 That Iankyn Clerk / & my gossip dame Ales 548
 And I my selue / in-to the feeldes went
 Myn husbonde was at london / al that lent
 I had the betir leiser / for to pleye
 And for to se / and eke for to be seye 552
 Of lusty folk / what wyst I / where my grace
 was shapen for to be / or in what place
 Therefore made I / my visitacions [leaf 73, back]
 To vigiles / and to processions 556
 To prechyng eke / and to theise pilgrimages
 To pleyes of miracles / and of mariages
 And wered vp-on / my gay skarlet gytes
 Theise wormes / ne theise mothes / ne theise mytes 560
 vp-on my paraille / frette hem neuere a del
 And wost þou why / for they were vsed wel
 ¶ Now wol I telle forth / what happed me
 I seye that in the feldes / walked we 564

Til trewely we had / swich daliaunce
 This clerk and I / that of my purueaunce
 I spak to him / and seide how that he
 If I were wydewe / he shulde wedde me 568
 ffor certeynly I seye / for no bobaunce
 3et was I neuere / with-uten purueaunce
 Of mariage / ne of othere thynges eke
 I hold a mouses hert / nat worth a leke 572
 That hath but on hole / for to stirte to
 And if that fayle / than is al I-do
 I bar him on honde / he had enchaunted me
 My dame taught me / that sotilte 576
 And eke I seide / I mette of him al nyght
 he wolde han slayn me / as I lay vp right
 And al my bed / was ful of verray blod
 But 3et I hope / that 3e shuln do me good 580
 ffor blod bytokeneth gold / as me was taught
 And al was fals / I dremed of it right nought
 But as I folwed ay / my dames loore
 As wel of that / as of othere thynges more 584
 But now sire late me sen / what I shuld seyn
 A ha by god / I haue my tale a-gayn
 ¶ (W) Whan that my fierthe husbonde / was on beere
 I wep algate / and mad sory chere 588
 As wyues moton / for it is the vsage
 And with my kercheue / I couered my visage
 But for that I was purueiede / of a make
 I wepte but smale / and that I vndertake 592
 To chirche was myn husbonde / born a-morwe
 with neyghnebores / that for him maden sorwe
 And Iankyn oure clerk / was oon of thoo
 As helpe me god / whan that I saw him goo 596
 After the beere / me thought he had a peire
 Of legges and of feet / so clene and so feire
 That al myn hert / I 3af vn-to his holde
 I trowe he was / a twenty wynter olde 600

And I was fourty / if I shal sey the sothe [leaf 74]
 But ȝet I had alwey / a coltyssh tothe
 Gat-tothed I was / and that be-cam me wele
 I had the prente / of seynt venus seele 604
 As help me god / I was a lusty oon
 And fair and riche / and ȝonge / and wel bygoñ
 And trewely / as myne husbondes tolde me
 I had the best quoniam / that myght be ¶ Nota 608
 ffor certes I am / al venerien
 In feelyng / and myn hert is Marcien
 Venus ȝaf my lust / my likerousnesse
 And Mars ȝaf me / my sturdy hardynesse 612
 Myn ascendent was Taur / and Mars pere-Inne
 Allas allas / that euere loue was synne
 I folwed alwey / myn inclynacione
 By vertue / of myn Constellacione 616
 That made me / I coude nat with-drawe
 My chaumbre of venus / fro a good felawe
 ȝet haue I Mars merk / vp-on my face
 And also / in a-nother pryue place 620
 ffor god so wysely / be my sauacion
 I loued neuere / by no discrecion
 But euere folwed / myn appetit
 Al-were he short / long blak or whijt 624
 I toke no kepe / so that he liked me
 how poore he was / ne eke of what degree
 ¶ What shulde I seye / but at the monthes ende
 This ioly Clerk / Iankyn þat was so hende 628
 hath wedded me / with greet solempnytee
 And to him ȝaf I / al the lond and fee
 That euere was me ȝeuen / there-byfore
 But afterward / me repented ful sore 632
 he nolde suffre / no thyng of my list
 By god he smot me / oonys with his fist
 On the cheke / for þat I rent / out of his book a leef
 That of the stroke / myn ere wex al deaf 636

Stiburne I was / as is a leonesse
 And of my tonge / a veray Iangeleresse
 And walke I wold / as I had don byforȝ
 ffrom hous to hous / al-though he had it sworȝ 640
 ffor whiche / he often tymes wold preche
 And me of olde Romaine gestes / teche
 how he / simplicius Gallus / laft his wyf
 And hire forsoke / for terme of al his lyf 644
 nought but for openheded / he hire say
 Lokyng out at his dore / vp-on a day [leaf 74, back]
 A-nother Romaine / told he me by name
 That for his wyf / was at a Sqmeres game 648
 with-uten his wetyng / he forsoke hire eke
 And than wold he / vp-on his bible seke
 That ilke prouerbe / of ecclesiaste
 where he comaundeth / & forbedeth faste 652
 Man shal nat suffre his wyf / go royle a-boute
 Than wold he sey right thus / withoute doute
 who-so that bildeth his hous / al of salwes ¶ Nota
 And priketh his blynd hors / ouer the falwes 656
 And suffreth his wyf / to seken halwes
 Is worthy to ben hanged / on the galwes
 But al for nought / I sette nought an hawe
 Of hise prouerbes / ne of his olde lawe 660
 Ne I wold nat of him / corrected be
 I hate him / that my vices telleth me
 And so don moo of vs / god wot / than I
 This mad him with me wood / al vtterly 664
 I wold nat forbere him / in no cas
 Now wyl I sey ȝow soth / by Seynt Thomas
 why that I rent out / of his book a leef
 ffor whiche he smot me so / that I was deef 668
 he had a bok / that gladly nyght and day
 ffor his desport / he wold it rede alway
 he cleped it valerie / and Theofaste
 At which book / he lough alwey ful fast 672

And eke there was somtyme / a Clerk at Rome
 A Cardynale that hight / Seynt Ierome
 That mad a book / a-geyn Iovynyan
 In whiche book eke / there was Terculan 676
 Crisippus / Tortula / and Helowys
 That was Abbess / nat fer fro Parys
 And eke the parobles / of Salamofi
 Ouydes art / and bookes many oon 680
 And alle theise were bounden / in o volume
 And euery nyght & day / was his custume
 Whan he had leiser / and vacacione
 ffrom other worldly / occupacione 684
 To redyn in this book / of wykked wyues
 he knew of hem / moo legendes & lyues
 Than ben of goode wyues / in the bible
 ffor trosteth wel / it is an impossible 688
 That any Clerk / wyl speke good of wyues
 But if it be / of holy Seyntes lyues
 Ne of noone othere wommen / neuere the moo
 Who peynted the lyon / telle me who [leaf 75] 692
 By god if a womman / had wryten stories
 As Clerkes han / with-Inne here oratories
 They wold han wretyn of men / more wykkednesse
 Than al the mark of Adam / may redresse 696
 The children of Mercurie / and of Venus
 Ben in here werkyng / ful contrarious
 Mercurie loueth wysdom / and science
 And venus loueth riot / and despence 700
 And for here dyuers / disposicion
 Eche fayleth / in others exaltacion
 As thus / god woot / Mercurie is desolate
 In pisses / whan venus is exaltate 704
 And venus falleth / there Mercurie is reised
 Therefore no womman / of no Clerk is preysed
 The Clerk whan he is old / & may nat do
 Of venus werkes / worth his olde shoo 708

Than syt he doun / and wryteth in his dotage
 That wommen conne nout kepen / here mariage
 But now to purpos / why I tolde the
 That I was beten / for a book parde 712
 Vp-on a nyght / Iankyn that was oure Sire
 Red on his book / as he sat by the fyre
 Of Eue first / that for hire wykkednesse
 Was al mankynde brought / to wretchednesse 716
 ffor which that ihesu crist / him self was slayn
 That bought vs / with his hert blod a-gayn
 loo heere expres of wommen / may 3e fynde
 That womman was the losse / of al mankynde 720
 Tho redde he me / how Sampson loost hise heeres
 Slepynge his lemman / kytte hem with hire sheres
 Thurgh which treson / lost he bothe hise eyen
 Tho redde he me / if that I shal nat lyen 724
 Of Hercules / and of Dyanyre
 That caused him / to sette him self a-fyre
 Nothyng for-gat he / the care and the woo¹
 That Socrates had / with hise wyues twoo 728
 how Exantipa / cast pisse vp-on hise bed
 This sely man sat stille / as he were ded
 he wypte his hed / no more durst he seyn
 But er that the thonder stynt / cometh reyn 732
 Of Phasipha / that was the Quene of Creete
 ffor shrewednesse him thought / the tale swete
 ffy speke no more / it is a grisly thyng
 Of hire horrible lust / & hire lykyng 736
 Of Clithermystra / for hire lecherie
 That falsly mad hire husbonde / for to deye
 He red it / with ful good deuocion [leaf 75, back]
 he told me eke / for what occasion 740
 Amphiorax at Thebes / lost his lyf
 Myn husbond had a legend / of his wyf
 Exiphilem / that for an ouche of gold
 hath preyly / vn-to the grekes I-told 744

Where that hire husbonde / hid him in a place
 ffor which he had / at Thebes sory grace
 Of lyma told he me / and of lucye
 They bothe maden / here husbondes for to deye 748
 That on for loue / that other was for hate
 lyma / hire husbonde / vp-on an euen late
 Enpoysoned hath / for that she was his foo
 lucya lykerous / loued hire husbond so 752
 That for he shuld alwey / vp-on hire thynke
 She ȝaf him swich / a maner loue drynke
 That he was ded / er it were by the morwe
 And thus algates / husbondes han sorwe 756
 Than told he me / how on lathimyus
 Compleyned / vn-to his felawe / Arryus
 That in his gardeyn / growed swich a tree
 On which he seide / how that hise wyues three 760
 honged hem self / for hertes dispetous
 O lef brother / quod this Arryus
 ȝeue me a plante / of thilk blissed tre
 And in myn gardeyn / planted shal it be 764
 Of lattere date / of wyues hath he red
 That some han slayn / here husbondes in here bed
 And let hire lecchour / dight hire al the nyght
 While that the cors / lay in the floor vp-right 768
 And some han dreuyn nayles / in here brayne
 While that they slep / & thus they han hem slayne
 Some han ȝeuen hem poysoñ / in here drynke
 he spak more harm / than hert may be-thynke 772
 And ther-with-al / he knew of moo prouerbes
 Than is this world / groweth gras or Erbes
 Bet is quod he / thyn habitacion
 Be with a lyon / or a foul dragon 776
 Than with a womman / vsyng for to chide
 Bet is quod he / hie in the roof a-byde
 Than with an angry womman / doun in the hous
 They ben so wykked / and so contrarious ¶ Nota 780

GROUP D. § 1. WIFE OF BATH'S PREAMBLE. Dd. 4. 24. 189

They haten / that here husbondes louen ay
 he seide a womman / kast hire shame a-way
 Whan she cast of hire smok / and forthere-moo
 A fair womman / but she be chast also 784
 Is lyke a gold ryng / in a sowes nose
 Who wold wene / or who wold suppose [leaf 76]
 The woo that in myn hert was / & the pyne
 And whan I saw / he wolde neuere fyne 788
 To reden on this cursed book / al nyght
 Al sodeynly / three leeuens haue I plight
 Out of his booke / right as he radde / & eke
 I with my fist / so toke him on the cheke 792
 That in our fyr / he fel bakward a-doun
 And he vp stirt / as doth a wood lyon
 And with his fist / he smot me on the hede
 That in the floor / I lay as I were dede 796
 And whan he saw / how stille that I lay
 he was a-gast / and wold han fled a-way
 Til at the last / out of my swough I brayde
 O hast þou slayn me / fals theef I sayde 800
 And for my lond / thus hast þou mordred me
 Or I be ded / 3et wole I kysse the
 And ner he com / and kneled faire a-doun
 And seide deere Suster / Alisoun 804
 As helpe me god / I shal the neuere smyte
 That I haue doon / it is thy self to wyte
 fforȝeue it me / and that I the byseke
 And 3et eftsones / I hitte him on the cheke 808
 And seide thef / thus meche am I a-wreke
 Now wol I dye / I may no lengere speke
 But at the last / with mechil kare & woo
 We fel accorded / be oure seluen twoo 812
 he 3af me al the brydel / in myn honde
 To han the gouernaunce / of hous & londe
 And of his tonge / and of his hond also
 And mad him brenne his book / a-noon right thoo 816

And whanne that I had getyn vn-to me
 Be maistrye / al the Soueraynte
 And that he seide / myn owen trewe wyf
 Do as the list / the terme of al thy lyf 820
 Kepe thyn honour / & kepe eke myn estate
 And after that day / we hadden neuere debate
 God help me so / I was to him as kynde
 As any wyf / fro Denmark vn-to Inde 824
 And also trewe / and so was he to me
 I preye to god / that sitteth in mageste
 So blisse his soule / for his mercy deere
 Now wol I seyn my tale / if ȝe wyln heere 828

¶ Heere maketh the frere an interempcion
 of the wyues tale [in margin]

¶ Ȟ The frere lough / whan he had herd al this
 Now dame quod he / so haue I ioye or blys
 This is a long preamble / of a tale
 And whan the sompnour / herd the frere gale ¶ The Sompnour
 loo quod the sompnour / for goddes armes two speketh to þe
frere
 A frere wyl entermente him / euere moo [leaf 76, back]
 loo goodmen / a flye and eke a frere
 Wol falle in euery dissh / and eke matere 836
 What spekest thou / of preambulacion
 What aumble or trotte / or pes / or go sitte down
 Thow lettest oure disport / in this manere
 ¶ ȝe wilt þou so Sompnour / quod the frere 840
 Now be my feith / I shal er that I goo
 Telle of Sompnoures / swich a tale or twoo
 That alle folk / shuln laughen / in this place
 Now elles frere / I be-shrewe thyn face 844
 Quod the Sompnour / and I be-shrewe me
 But if I telle tales / two or three
 Of freres / or þat I come to Sydyngburne
 That I shal make / thyn hert for to morne 848

ffor wel I wot / thy pacience is a-gon

¶ Oure host cried pees / and that a-noon

And seide / late the womman telle hire tale

3e fare as folk / that dronken ben of Ale 852

Do dame / telle forth 3oure tale / & that is best

Al redy sire quod she / right as 3ow list

If I haue lycence / of this worthy ffrere

3is dame quod he / tell forth / & I wyl here 856

¶ Hic desinit prologus /

[on leaf 76, back]

et incipit fabula Vxoris de Bathe

In the olde dayes / of kyng Arthour
 Of which that Bretons speken / gret honour
 Al was this lond / fulfilled of fairie
 The Elf Quene / with hire ioly companye 860
 Daunced ful ofte / in many a grene mede
 This was the olde oppynyon / as I rede
 I speke of manye / hundred yeres a-go
 But now can no man / se noone Elues moo 864
 ffor now the gret charite / and preyerer
 Of lymytours / and other holy ffreres
 That serchen euery lond / and euery streme
 As thikke as motes / in the Sonne beme 868
 Blissyng Halles / chaumbres / kychenes / boures
 Citees / Burghes / Castelles / heye Toures
 Thropes / Bernes / Shepenes / Deyries
 This maketh that there ben / no fayeries 872
 ffor there as wont / to walken was an Elf
 There walketh now / the lymytour him-self
 In vndermeles / and in morwenynges [leaf 77]
 And seith hise matynes / & his holy thynges 876
 As he goth / in his lymytacion
 wommen moun go now / safely vp & doun
 In euery busshe / and vnder euery tree
 There is noon other / Incubus but he 880
 And he ne wyl do hem / but dishonour *
 ¶ And so byfel / that this kyng Arthour
 had in his hous / a lusty bachelor
 That on a day / cam ridyng fro ryuer 884

And happed that allone / as he was born
 he saw a mayde / walkyng him byforñ
 Of whyche mayde / a-noon maugre hire hede
 By verray force / byraft hire maydenhede 888
 ffor which oppression / was swich clamour
 And swich pursute / vn-to the kyng Arthour
 That dampned was this knyght / for to be deed
 By cours of lawe / and shuld han loost his heed 892
 Paraurenture / swich was the statute thoo
 But that the Quene / and othere ladies moo
 So longe preyeden / the kyng of grace
 Til he his lyf / him graunted in the place 896
 And 3af him to the Quene / al at hire wyll
 To chese wheither she wolde / him saue or spille
 The Quene thanketh the kyng / with al hire myght
 And aftir this / thus spak she to the knyght 900
 Whan that she saw hire tyme / vp-on a day
 Thow stondest 3et quod she / in swich array
 That of thy lif / 3et hast pou non seurte
 I graunte the lif / if thow canst telle me 904
 what thyng is it / that wommen most desiren
 Be war / & kepe thyn nekke bon / from Ireñ
 And if pou canst nat / telle it me a-noon
 3et wol I 3eue the / leue for to goon 908
 A twelwemoneth & a day / to seche & leere
 An answee sufficeant / in this matere
 And seurte wol I haue / er that thow pace
 Thy body for to 3elden / in this place 912
 Wo was this knyght / and sorwefully he syketh
 But what / he may nat do / al as him liketh
 And at the last / he ches him for to wende
 And come a-geyn / right at the 3eres ende 916
 with swich answee / as god him wold purueye
 And taketh his leue / and wendeth forth his weye
 he seketh euery hous / and euery place
 where as he hopeth / for to fynden grace [leaf 77, back] 920

To lerne what thyng / wommen louen moost
 But he ne coude / aryuen in no coost
 where as he myght fynde / in this matere
 Two creatures / accordyng in fere 924
 Some seyden / wommen louen best richesse
 Some seiden honour / some seyden Iolynesse
 Some seiden riche aray / some seiden lust a-bedde
 And ofte tymes to be wydewe / and wedde 928
 Some seiden that oure hert / is most eased
 whan that we ben / I-flatered / and I-pled
 he goth ful ny the sothe / I wol nat lye
 A man shal wynne vs best / with flaterie 932
 And with attendaunce / and besynesse
 Ben we I-lymed / bothe more & lesse
 And some seyn / that we louen best
 ffor to be free / & do right as vs list 936
 And that no man / repreeue vs / of oure vice
 But seye / þat we ben wyse / & no thyng nyce
 ffor trewely / there is noon of vs alle
 If ony wyght / wyl clawe vs on the galle 940
 That we nyl kyke / for he seith vs soth
 Assay / and he shal fynde it / þat so doth
 ffor he we neuere / so vicious with-Inne
 we wol be holden / wys / and clene of synne 944
 And some seiden / that gret delyt han we
 ffor to be holden stable / and eke secree
 And on a purpos / stedfastly to dwelle
 And nought be-wreye thyng / that men vs telle 948
 But that tale is nought worth / a rake stele
 Parde / we wommen / conne no thyng hele
 wytnesse on Myda / wol 3e here the tale
 Ouyde a-monges / othere thynges smale 952
 Seide / Myda had / vnder his longe heeres
 Growyng vp-on his hed / two asses eres
 The which vice he hid / as he best myght
 ful sotilly / fro euery mannes sight 956

That saw his wyf / there wüst of it no moo
 he loued hire most / and trosted hire also
 he preyede hire / that to no creature
 She shulde tellen / of his disfigure 960
 She swor *him* nay / for al this world to wynne
 She nolde do / that velanye or synne
 To make hire husbonde / han so foul a name
 She nolde nat telle it / for hire owen shame 964
 But natheles / hire thought right that he deyed
 That she so longe / shulde a counseil hide
 Hire thought it swal / so sore a-boute hire hert [leaf 78]
 That nedely som word / hire must a-stert 968
 And sithe she durst nat / telle it to no man
 Doun to a Mareys / fast by / she ran ¶ Nota bene
 Til she come there / hire hert was a-fyre
 And as a bytore / bumbleth in the myre 972
 She leid her mouth / vn-to the water doun
 Bewreye me nat / thow water with thy soun
 Quod she / to the I telle it and no moo
 Myn husbonde hath long / asses Eres twoo 976
 Now is myn hert al hol / now is it oute
 I myght no lengere kepe it / out of doute
 here may 3e se / though we a tyme a-byde 979
 3et out it must / we conne no counseil hide ¶ Verum est
 The remenaunt of the tale / if 3e wol here
 Redeth Ouyde / and there 3e may it lere
 ¶ This knyght of whiche / my tale is specially
 whan that he saw / he myght nought come therby 984
 This is to seyn / what wommen louen most
 with-Inne his breest / ful sorweful was the goost
 But hom he goth / he myght nat sojourne
 The day was comen / þat homward must he turne 988
 And in his wey / as happed *him* to ride
 In al his care / vnder a fforest side
 Where-as he sey / vp-on a daunce goo
 Of ladyes foure and twenty / and 3et moo 992

Toward the which daunce / he drow ful 3erne
 In hope that he / sum wysdom shulde lerne
 But certeynly / er he cam fully there
 I-vanysshed was this daunce / he nyst where 996
 No creature saw he / that bar lyf
 Saue oon the grene / he saw sittynge a wyf
 A foulere wyght / there may no man deuyse
 A-geyn the knyght / this olde wyf gan aryse 1000
 And seide / sire knyght / here forth ne lith no wey
 Telle me / what that 3e seken / be 3oure fey
 Paraurenture / it may the bettir be [¹ thyng *over good dotted out*]
 Theise olde folk / conne mechil thyng¹ quod she, 1004
 My leue Moder / quod this knyght certeyn
 I nam but ded / but if that I can seyn
 what thyng it is / that womman most desire
 Coude 3e me wysse / I wolde wel quyte 3our hire 1008
 Plyght me thy trouthe / here in myn hond quod she
 The nexte thyng / that I requere the
 Thow shalt it do / if it be in thy myght
 And I wyl telle it 3ow / er it be nyght 1012
 Hauē here my trouthe / quod the knyght I graunte [*cf. 73, bk.*]
 Than quod she / I dar me wel a-vaunte
 Thy lif is saf / for I wol stonde ther-by
 Vp-on my lif / the Quene wol seye as I 1016
 lat se / which is the pruddest / of hem alle
 That wereth on / a kerchef or a calle
 That dar say nay / of that I shal the teche
 lat vs go forth / with-uten lengere speche 1020
 Tho rovned she / a pistel in his eere
 And bad him to be glad / & haue no fere
 ¶ Whan they ben comen / to the court / this knyght
 Seyde / he had hold his day / as he had hight 1024
 And redy was his answey / as he seide
 fful many a noble wyf / & many a mayde
 And many a wydewe / for that they ben wyse
 The Quene hire self / sittynge as lustise 1028

Assembled been / his answere for to here
 And afterward / this knyght was bode appere
 To euery wyght / comaunded was silence
 And that the knyght / shulde telle in audience 1032
 What thyng / that worldly wommen / louen best
 This knyght ne stod nat stille / as doth a best
 But to this question / a-noon answerede
 with manly voys / that al the courte it herde 1036
 My liege lady / generally *quod* he
 wommen desiren / to han soueraignete
 As wel ouer hire husbonde / as hire loue
 And for to ben / in maistrie *him* a-boue 1040
 This is youre most desire / though *ȝe* me kille
 Doth as *ȝow* list / I am here at youre wyll
 ¶ In al the courte / ne was there wyf ne mayde
 Ne wydewe / that contraried that he sayde 1044
 But seiden he was worthy / to haue his lyf
 And with that word / vp stirt this olde wyf
 which that the knyght saw / sittynge on the grene
 Mercy *quod* she / my souereyne lady Quene 1048
 Er that youre courte departe / do me right
 I taught this answere / vn-to the knyght
 ffor which he plight me / his trouthe there
 The first thyng / that I wolde *him* requere 1052
 he wolde it do / if it lay in his myght
 Byfore this courte / than preye I the sire knyght
 Quod she / that *pou* me take vn-to thy wyf
 ffor wel thou wost / that I haue kept thy lif 1056
 If I sey fals / sey nay vp-on thy fey
 ¶ This knyght answered / alas and weilawey
 I wot right wel / pat swich was myn byheste
 ffor goddes loue / as chese a newe requeste [leaf 79] 1060
 Take al my good / and late my body goo
 Nay thanne *quod* she / I shrewe vs bothe twoo
 ffor though that I be foul / old and pore
 I nold for al the metal / ne for ore 1064

That vnder erthe is graue / or lith a-boue
 But if thy wyf I were / and eke thy loue
 ¶ My loue *quod* he / nay my dampnacione
 Allas that ony / of my nacione 1068
 Shulde euere so foule / desparaged be
 But al for nought / the end is this / that he
 Constreyned was / he nedes must hire wedde
 And taketh this old wyf / & goth to bedde 1072
 Now wolde somme men seyn / parauenture
 That for my negligence / I do no cure
 To telle 3ow the ioie / and al the array
 That at the fest was / that ilke day 1076
 To which thyng / shortly answeren I shal
 I seye there was no feest / ne ioie at al
 There nas but heynesse / and mechel sorwe
 ffor preuily he wedded hire / on the morwe 1080
 And al day after / hid him as an Owle
 So woo was him / his wyf loked so foule
 Gret was the woo / the knyght had in his thought
 whan he was with his wyf / abedde I-brought 1084
 he walueth / and he turneth to and froo
 This olde wyf / lay smylyng euere moo
 And seide / o dere husbonde benedicite
 ffareth euery knyght thus / with his wyf as 3e 1088
 Is this the lawe / of kyng Arthoures hous
 Is euery knyght of his / thus daungerous
 I am 3oure owen loue / & eke 3oure wyf
 I am she / which þat saued hath 3oure lyf 1092
 And certes / 3et ne dide I 3ow / neuere vnright
 Why fare 3e thus with me / this first nyght
 3e faren like a man / had lost his wytte
 what is my gilt / for goddes loue telle itte 1096
 And it shal ben amended / if I may
 Amendid / *quod* this knyght / allas nay nay
 It wol not ben amended / neuere moo
 Thow art so lothly / and so old also 1100

And ther-to comen / of so lowe a kynde
That lytel wonder is / though I walwe & wynde
So wolde god / myn hert wold brest
Is this *quod* she / the cause of ȝoure vnrest 1104
Ȝee certeynly *quod* he / no wonder is
Nowe sire *quod* she / I coude amende al this [leaf 79, back]
If that me list / er it were dayes three
So wel ȝe myȝht bere ȝow / vn-to me 1108
¶ But for ȝe speken / of swich gentilnesse ¶ *Nota causas*
As is descendid / out of olde richesse *generositatis*
That therfore ȝe shulden / ben gentilmen 1111
Swich arrogance / is nat worth an hen ¶ arrogance is pride
loke who that is most / vertuous al-vey
Preue and apert / and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedis / that he can ¶ *Nota verissimam*
Take him for the grettist / gentil man *causam generosi-*
tatis
Crist wol we clayme of him / our gentilnesse 1117
Nought of our eldres / for here old richesse
ffor though they ȝeue vs / al here heritage
ffor which we cleyme / to be of hey parage 1120
Ȝet may they nat be-quethe / for no thyng
To noon of vs / here vertuous leuyng
That mad hem gentil men / called to be
And bad vs folwen hem / in swich degree 1124
wel can the wys Poete / of fflorence
That hight Dant / speken of this sentence
lo in swych maner ryme / is Dantes tale
fful seld vp riseth / by his braunches smale 1128
Prowesse of man / for god of his goodnes
wol / that of him we clayme / oure gentilnes
ffor of oure auncestres / mow we no thyng clayme
But temporal thyng / that man may hurt & mayme 1132
Every wyȝht wot this / as wel as I
If gentilnesse were plaunted / naturelly
vn-to a certeyn lynage / doun the lyne
Pryue and apert / than wold they neuere fyne 1136

To don of gentilnesse / the fair office
 They myght do / no velanye or vice
 Tak fir & bere it / in the derkest hous 1139
 Betwix this / and the Mount of Caucasous ¶ Exemplum
 And lete men shette the dores / & go thenne
 3et wol the fyr / as faire lye and brenne
 As twenty thousand men / myght it byholde
 his office naturel / ay wol it holde 1144
 vp peril of my lif / til that it deye
 here may 3e se wel / how that gentrie
 Is nat annexed / to possessione
 Sith folk ne doon / here operacione 1148
 Alwey as doth the fir / lo in his kynde
 ffor god it wot / men moun wel often fynde
 A lordes sone do shame / and velanye
 And he that wol han / prys of his gentrye 1152
 ffor he was born / of a gentil hous
 And had hise auncestres / noble and vertuous
 And nyl him seluen / do no gentil dedes [leaf 80]
 Ne folwe his gentil auncetrye / that ded is 1156
 he is nat gentil / be he Duke or Erl
 ffor vyleyns synful dedes / maken a Cherl
 ffor gentilnesse / nys but renounee
 Of thyn Auncestres / for here heye bounte 1160
 which is a straunge thyng / to thy persone
 Thy gentilnesse cometh / fro god allone
 Thanne cometh oonly / our gentilnesse of grace
 It was no thyng be-quethed vs / with oure place 1164
 Thynketh how noble / as seith valerius
 was thilke Tullius / hostilius
 That out of pouerte roos / to heygñ noblesse
 Redeth Senek / and redeth eke Boece 1168
 There shul 3e sen expresse / that no dred is
 That he is gentil / that doth gentil dedis ¶ Nota bene
 And therefore leue husbonde / I thus conclude
 Al were it / that myne Auncestres weren rude 1172

3et may the heye god / and so hope I
 Graunte me grace / to lyuen vertuously
 Than am I gentil / whan that I begynne
 To lyuen vertuously / and weyven synne 1176
 ¶ And there as 3e / of pouerte me repreeue ¶ Nota de pau-
 The heye god / on whom that we byleue pertate
 In wyful pouert / ches to leue his lyf
 And certes euery man / Mayden or wyf 1180
 May vnderstonde / that Ihesus heuene kyng
 Ne wold nat chese / a vicious lyuyng
 Glad pouerte / is an honest thyng certeyn
 This wol Senek / and othere clerkes seyn 1184
 who-so that halt him paid / of his pouerte
 I holde him riche / al had he nought a shert
 he that coueyteth / is a pore wyght
 ffor he wold han / that is nought in his myght 1188
 But he that nought hath / ne coueyteth to haue
 Is richie / al-though 3e hold him but a knaue
 verray synne pouerte / is proprely
 Iuuenal speketh / of pouerte merily 1192
 The pore man / whan he goth by the way
 Byfore the theues / he may synge & pley
 Pouerte is hateful good / and as I gesse
 A ful greet bryngere / out of besynesse 1196
 A gret amendere eke / of sapience
 To him that taketh it / in pacience
 Pouerte is this / al-though it seme alenge
 Possession / that no wyght wol chalenge 1200
 Pouerte ful often / whan a man is lowe ¶ Nota bene
 Maketh his god / and eke him self to knowe [leaf 90, back]
 Pouerte / a spektakil is / as thynketh me
 Thurgh which he may / his verray frendes se 1204
 And perfore sire / syn that I nougt 3ow greue
 Of my pouerte / no more 3e me repreeue
 Now sire / of elde 3e repreeue me
 And certes sire / though non auctorite 1208

were in no book / 3e gentiles of honour
 Seyn / þat men shulde / an olde wyght do fauour
 And clepe him fader / for 3oure gentilnesse
 And auctoures shal I fynden / as I gesse 1212
 Now there as 3e seyn / þat I am foul and old
 Than drede 3ow nought / to ben a Cokewold
 ffor filthe and elde / also mot I the
 Ben grete wardeyns / vp-on chastite 1216
 But neueretheles / syn I knowe 3oure delite
 I shal fulfille / 3oure worldly appetite
 Chese now quod she / on of theise thynges twey
 To han me foul and old / til that I dey 1220
 And be to 3ow / a trewe humble wyf
 And neuere 3ow displese / in al my lyf
 Or ellis 3e wyl han me / 3ong and faire
 And take 3oure auenture / of the repaire 1224
 That shal be to 3oure hous / by-cause of me
 Or in som other place / it may wel be
 Now chese 3oure self / wheiper that 3ow liketh
 This knyght auyseth him / & sore syketh 1228
 But at the last / he seide in this manere
 My lady & my loue / and wyf so dere
 I putte me / in 3oure wyse gouernaunce
 Cheseth 3oure self / which may be most plesaunce 1232
 And most honour / to 3ow and me also
 I do no force / wheither of the two
 ffor as 3ow liketh / it suffiseth me
 Then haue I get of 3ow / the maistrye quod she 1236
 Syn I may chese / and gouerne as me list
 3e certes wyf quod he / I holde it the best
 Kisse me quod she / we be no lengere wrothe
 ffor be my trouthe / I shal be to 3ow bothe 1240
 This is to seyn / 3e bothe fair and good
 I preye to god / that I mot staruen wood
 But I to 3ow / be also good and trewe
 As euere was wyf / sithe þat the world was newe 1244

And but I be to-morwe / as fair to sene
 As any lady / Emperesse or Quene
 That is be-twix the Est / & eke the west
 Do with my lif and deth / right as ȝow list 1248
 Cast vp the curtyn / loke how that it is [leaf 81]
 And whan þat the knyght / saw verreyly al this
 That she so fair was / & so ȝong ther-to
 ffor ioye he hent hire / in hise armes two 1252
 his hert bathed / in a bath of blisse
 A thousand tymes a rowe / he gan hire kysse
 And she obeyed him / in euery thyng
 That myght don him plesaunce or likyng 1256
 And thus they leue / vn-to here lyues ende
 In parfyt ioye / and ihesu crist vs sende
 husbondes meke / ȝonge and fressh abedde
 And grace to ouer-byde hem / that we wedde 1260
 And eke I preye ihesu / shorte here lyues
 That nought wyl be gouerned / by here wyues
 And olde and angry / nygardes of despence
 God sende hem sone / verray pestilence 1264
 ¶ Hic desinit fabula Vxoris de Bathe

[on leaf 81]

Et incipit prologus fratris

THis worthy Lymytour / this noble frere
 he make alwey / a maner louryng chere
 vp-on this Sompnour / but for honeste
 No vyleyns word / to him as 3et spak he 1268
 But at the laste / he seide vn-to the wyf
 Dame quod he / god 3eue 3ow right good lyf
 3e han here touched / also mot I the
 In scole mater / a greet difficultee 1272
 3e han seide meche thyng / right wel I seye
 But Dame / here as we riden / by the weye
 vs nedeth nought to speken / but of game
 Ane lete auctorites be / a goddes name 1276
 To prechyng and to scole / of clergie
 And if it like / vn-to this compaignye
 I wyl 3ow of a Sompnour / telle a game
 Parde 3e may wel knowen / by the name 1280
 That of a Sompnour / may no good be seide
 I preye that noon of 3ow / be euele a-payde
 A Sompnour is a rennere / vp and down
 With maundementez / for ffornicacion 1284
 And is I-bete / at euery tounes ende
 ¶ Oure host tho spak / a sire 3e shuld ben hende
 And curteys / as a man of 3oure estat
 In compaignye / we wyn haue noon debat 1288
 Telleth 3oure tale / and late the Sompnour be [leaf 81, back]
 Nay quod the Sompnour / late him sey to me
 What so him list / whan it cometh to my lot
 By god I shal him quyten / euery grot 1292
 I shal him telle / which a gret honour
 It is to be / a flaterying lymytour
 And eke / of ful many a-nother crime
 Which nedeth nat / to rehercen at this tyme 1296
 And his office / I shal him telle I-wys
 ¶ Oure host answered / pees nomore of this
 And after this / he seide vn-to the ffrere
 Telleth forth 3oure tale / myn owen maister dere 1300

[on leaf 81, back]

¶ Incipit fabula fratris

Whilom there was dwellyng / in my contree
 An Archedekene / a man of hey degree
 That boldely / dede / execucioñ
 In punysshying / of fornicacioñ 1304
 Of wycheecraft / and eke of baudrye
 Of diffamacion / and aduoutrye
 Of chirche Reues / and of testaments
 Of Contractes / and of lak of Sacramentes 1308
 Of Vsurie / and of Symonye also
 But certis lecchours / dide he grettest woo
 They shulden synge / if that they were hent
 And smale titheres / weren foule I-shent 1312
 If ony Persone / wold vp-on hem pleyne
 There myght a-stert him / no pecunyal peyne
 ffor smale tithes / and for smale offrynge
 he mad the people / pytously to synge 1316
 ffor er the Busshop / caught hem with his hoke
 They weren / in the Archedekenes boke
 And than had he / thurgh his Iurisdiccioñ
 Power / to don on hem correccioñ 1320
 he had a sompnour / redy to his hond
 A Slier boy / was noon in Engelond
 ffor sotilly he had / his espialle
 That taught him wele / where it myght availle 1324
 he coude spere / of lecchoures oon or twoo
 To techen him / to foure and twenty moo
 ffor though this sompnour / wod were as an hare
 To telle hise harlotrie / I wyl nat spare 1328

ffor we ben out / of here correccioñ
 They han of vs / no Iurisdiccioñ
 Ne neuere shuln / terme of al here lyues [leaf 83]
 Peter so ben the wommen / of the styues 1332
 Quod the sompnour / I put out of our cure
 Pees with myschaunce / and with mysauenture
 Thus seide oure host / and late him telle his tale
 Now telleth forth / and lat the Sompnour gale 1336
 Ne spareth nought / myn owen maister deere
 This fals thef / this Sompnour / quod the frere
 had alwey / Baudes / redy to his hond
 As ony hauke / to lure in Engelond 1340
 That told him al the secree / that they knewe
 ffor hire acqueyntaunce / was nat comen of newe
 They weren hise approwoures / preuily
 he tok him self / a gret profyt ther-by 1344
 his maister knew nat alwey / what he wan
 With-uten maundement / a lewed man
 he coude sompne / vp payne of cristes curs
 And they were Inly glad / for to fille his purs 1348
 And make him greete festis / at the nale
 And right as Iudas / had purses smale
 And was a thef / right swich a thef was he
 his maister had but half / his duete 1352
 he was / if I shal ȝeuen him his layde
 A thef / and eke a sompnour / and a baude
 he had eke wenchis / at his retynew
 That wheither sire Robert / or sire Heughe 1356
 Or Iohn or Raf / or who-so that it were
 That lay by hem / they told it in his eere
 Thus was the wenche / and he of oon assent
 And he wold fecche / a feyned maundement 1360
 And sompne hem to chapetle / bothe two
 And pille the man / and late the wenche go
 Than wold he sey frend / I shal for thy sake
 Do strike the out / of oure lettres blake 1364

The thar no more / as in this cas trauaille
 I am thy frend / there I may the auaille
 Certeyn he knew / of bryboures moo
 Than possible is / to telle in 3eres twoo 1368
 ffor in this world / nys dogge for the bowe
 That can an hurt deer / from an hol bet knowe
 Than that this Sompnour / knew a sly lechour
 Or on aduouter / or a Paramour 1372
 And for that was the fruyt / of al his rente
 Therefore on it he sette / al his entente
 And so byfel / that ones vp-on a day
 This sompnour euere / waytyng on his pray 1376
 Rod for to sompne / an old wyf horrible [leaf 82, back]
 ffeynyng a cause / for he wold hire brydle
 And happed that he saw / byforñ him ryde
 A gay 3oman / vnder a forest syde 1380
 A bowe he bar / and arwes bryght and kene
 he had vp-on / a courteby of Grene
 An hat vp-on his hed / with frenges blake
 Sire quod this sompnour / heyl and wel a-take 1384
 Welcome quod he / and euery good felawe
 Whider ridest þou / vnder this grene wode shawe
 Seide this 3oman / wylt þou fer to-day
 This sompnour answered / and seide nay 1388
 heere fast by quod he / is myn entent
 To riden / for to reysen vp / a rent
 That longeth to my lordes / duete
 A / art thou thanne a bayly / 3e quod he 1392
 he durst nat for verray velanye / and shame
 Sey that he was a sompnour / for the name
 Depardeux quod this 3oman / dere brother
 Thow art a Bailly / and I am a-nother 1396
 I am vnknownen / as in this contree
 Of thyn acqeyntaunce / I wold preye the
 And eke of brotherhede / if that thou list
 I haue gold and siluer / in my chest 1400

If that the happed / to come in-to our shire
 Al shal be thyn / right as thou wolt desire
 Graunt mercy *quod* this Sompnour / be my feith
 Euerych in otheres hand / his trouthe leith 1404
 ffor to be sworn bretheren / til that they deye
 In daliaunce they reden forth / and pleye
 This sompnour which þat was / as ful of Iangles
 As ful of venym ben / theise wariangles 1408
 And euere enqueryng / vp-on euery thyng
 Brother *quod* he / where is now / þoure dwellyng
 Another day / if that I shuld þow seche
 This þeman him answered / in softe speche 1412
 Brother *quod* he / fer in the North contree
 Where as I hope / somtyme I shal the se
 Er we departe / I shal the so wel wysse
 That of myn hous / ne shalt þou neuere mysse 1416
 Now Brother *quod* this Sompnour / I þow preye
 Teche me / whil we riden by the weye
 Syn that þe ben / a Bailly / as am I
 Som sotiltee / and telle me feithfully 1420
 In myn office / how that I may most wynne
 And spareth nat / for conscience or for synne
 But as my brother / tell me how do þe [leaf 88]
 Now be my trouthe / dere brother seyde he 1424
 As I shal tellen the / a feithful tale
 My wages ben ful streyte / and eke ful smale
 My lord is hard to me / and daungerous
 And myn office / is ful laborious 1428
 And therefore / by extorcioñs I lyue
 ffor-sothe I tak / al that men wol me þeue
 Algate by sleighte / or by violence
 ffor þere to þere / I wynne al my dispenche 1432
 I can no betir tellen / feithfully
 ¶ Now certis *quod* this Sompnour / so fare I
 I spare nat to take / god it wot
 But if it be to heuy / or to hot 1436

What I may gete / in counseil preuily
 No manere conscience / of that haue I
 Ner myn extercioñ / I might nat lyuen
 Ne of swich lapes / wol I nat be shreuen 1440
 Stomak ne conscience / knowe I noon
 I shrewe theise shriftefaderes / euerychoñ
 Wel be we mette / by god & by Seynt Iame
 But leue brother / telle me thy name 1444
 Quod this Sompnour / right in this mene while
 This ȝeman gan / a litel for to smyle
 Brother quod he / wylt þou that I the telle
 I am a fende / my dwellyng is in helle 1448
 And here I ryde / a-boute my purchasyng
 To wete / where men wold me ȝeue / ony thyng
 My purchas is the effect / of al my rent
 loke how thou ridest / for the same entent 1452
 To wyne good / thou rekkest neuere how
 Ryght so fare I / for ride wold I now
 Vn-to the worlddes ende / for a preye
 ¶ A quod this Sompnour / benedicite what ȝe seye 1456
 I wende ȝe were / a ȝeman trewely
 ȝe han a mannes shaþ / as wel as I
 han ȝe thanne a figure / determinate
 In helle there ȝe ben / in ȝoure estate 1460
 Nay certeynly quod he / there han we noone
 But whan vs liketh / we can take vs one
 Or ellis make ȝow seme / we ben shape
 Somtyme lyke a man / or lyke an Ape 1464
 Or lyke an Aungel / can I ride or go
 It is no wonder thyng / though it be so
 A lousy Iogelour / can disceyue the
 And parde ȝet can I / moore craft than he 1468
 Why quod this Sompnour / ride ȝe than or gon [leaf 83, back]
 In sondry shaþ / and nat alwey in oon
 ffor we quod he / wyln vs swich formes make
 As most able is / our preyes for to take 1472

What maketh ȝow / to han al this labour
 fful many a cause / leue sire Sompnour
 Seide this fende / but al thyng hath tyme
 The day is short / and it is passed pryme 1476
 And ȝet ne wan I / no thyng in this day
 I wol entende / to wynnyng if I may
 And nat entende / oure wyttes to declare
 ffor brother myn / thy wyt is al to bare 1480
 To vnderstonde / al-though I told hem thee
 But for thow axest / why laboren we
 ffor somtyme we ben / goddis Instrumentis
 And meenes to do / his comaundementis 1484
 Whan that him list / vp-on his creaturis
 In diuerse actes / and in dyuers fyguris
 With-uten him / we han no myght certayne
 If that him list / to stonden there a-gayne 1488
 And somtyme at oure preyer / han we leue
 Oonly the body / and nat the soule greue
 Wytnesse on Iob / whom that we dedyn woo
 And somtyme han we myght / of bothe twoo 1492
 This is to seyn / of soule and body eke
 And somtyme be we / suffred for to seke
 Vp-on a man / and do his soule vnrest
 And nat his body / and al is for the best 1496
 Whan he withstondeth / our temptacioñ
 It is the cause of his / saluacioñ
 Al be it / that it was / nat oure entente
 he shulde be saf / but that we wold him hente 1500
 And somtyme be we / seruauñt vn-to man
 As to the Erchebusshop / seynt Dunstan
 And to the Apostles / seruauñt eke was I
 ¶ ȝet telle me quod the sompnour feithfully 1504
 Make ȝe ȝow newe bodyes / thus alwey
 Of Elementis / the fend answered nay
 Sumtyme we feyne / and sumtyme we aryse
 With dede bodyes / in ful sondry wyse 1508

And speke as renably / and faire and wel
 As to Phitonissa / dide Samuel
 And ȝet wyl some men seyn / it was nat he
 I do no force / of ȝoure dyuynyte 1512
 But of o thyng I warne the / I wol nat Iape
 Thow wolt algates wete / how we be shape
 Thow shalt here afterward / my brother deere
 Come there / the nedeth nat of me to lere [leaf 84] 1516
 For þou shalt / be thyn owen experience
 Come in a chayer / rede al this sentence
 Bette than virgile / while he was on lyue
 Or Dant also / nowe late vs ride blyue 1520
 ffor I wyl holde / companye with the
 Til it be so / that thow forsake me
 ¶ Nay quod this sompnour / that shal nat betide ¶ Sompnour
 I am a ȝeman / that knowen is ful wyde 1524
 My trouthe wol I holde / as in this caas
 ffor though thow were / the deuele Sathanas
 My trouthe wyl I holde / to the my brother
 As I haue sworn / and ech of vs to other 1528
 ffor to be trewe bretheren / as in this cas
 And bothe we gon / a-bouten oure purchas
 Take thow thy part / what þat men wol the ȝeue
 And I shal myn / thus may we bothe leue 1532
 And if that any of vs / haue more than other
 Lat him be trewe / and part it with his brother
 ¶ I graunte quod the Deuele / be my fey
 And with that word / they ryden forth here wey 1536
 And right at the entryng / of the tounes ende
 To which this sompnour / shoþ him for to wende
 They saw a cart / that charged was with hey
 Which that a Cartere / drof forth in his wey 1540
 Depe was the weye / for which the cart stode
 This Cartere smot / and cried as he were wode
 hayt Brok hayt Skot / what spare ȝe for the stones
 The fend quod he / ȝow fecche body and bones 1544

As ferforth / as euere were ȝe foled
 So mechil woo / as I haue with ȝow tholed
 The deuele haue al / bothe hors Cart and hey
 ¶ This sompnour seide / here shuln we han a pley 1548
 And nere the fend he drow / as nought ne were
 ful pryuely / and rovned in his Eere
 herkene my brother / herken be thyn feith
 herest thow nat how / that the Cartere seith 1552
 hent it a-noon / for he hath ȝeue it the
 Bothe hey and cart / and eke hise caples three
 Nay quod the deuele / god wot neuere a dele
 It is nat his entent / trost me wele 1556
 Aske him thy selue / if ȝou nat trowest me
 Or ellys stynt a while / and ȝou shalt se
 This Cartere takkith his hors / on the croupe
 And they bygonne / to drawen & to stoupe 1560
 hayt now quod he / there ihesu crist ȝow blisse
 And al his handwerk / bothe more & lesse
 That was wel twyt / my owen lyard boy
 I preye to god saue thy body and Seynt Loy [leaf 84, back]
 Now is my Cart / out of the slow parde 1565
 loo brother quod the fend / what told I the
 here may ȝe se / myn owen dere brother
 The charl spak oo thyng / but he thouȝt a-nother 1568
 late vs go forth / a-bouten oure vyage
 heere wyne I no-tyng / vp-on this cariage
 Whan that they comen / som-what out of tounne
 This Sompnour to his brother / gan to rounne 1572
 Brother quod he / here woneth an olde rebekke
 That had almost / as lef to lese hire nekke
 As for to ȝeue / a peny of hire good
 I wol haue twelue pans / though þat she be wood 1576
 Or I wyl somoun hire / vn-to oure office
 And ȝet god wot / of hire knowe I no vice
 But for ȝou canst not / as in this contree
 Wynne thy cost / take here ensauple of me 1580

This sompnour clappeth / at the wydewes gate
 Come out quod he / thow old / very trate
 I trowe þou hast / some frere or prest with the
 Who clappeth there / seith this wyf / benedicite 1584
 God saue þow sire / what is þoure swete wyll
 I haue quod he / of somouns here a bille
 vp peyne of cursynge / loke that thow be
 To morwe byfore / the Archedekenes kne 1588
 To answe're vn-to the courte / of certeyne thynges
 Now lord quod she / crist ihesu / kyng of kynges
 So wysly help me / as I ne may
 I haue ben seeke / and that ful many a day 1592
 I may nat go quod she / so fer / ne ryde
 But I be ded / so pryketh it in my syde
 May I nat aske / a libel sire sompnour
 And answe're there / be my procuratur 1596
 To swiche thyng / as men wold appose me
 ȝis quod this sompnour / paye a-noon lat se
 Twelue pens to me / and I wol the acquyte
 I shal no profyt han ther-by / but lyte 1600
 My Maister hath the profyt / and nat I
 Come of / and late me ryden / hastily
 ȝeue me twelue pans / I may no lengere tarye
 Twelue pens quod she / now lady Seynt Marye 1604
 So wysly help me / out of care and synne
 This wyde world / though þat I shuld it wynne
 Ne haue I nat twelue pans / with-Inne myn holde
 ȝe knowen wel / that I am pore and olde 1608
 Kythe þoure almesse / on me pore wrecche
 Nay thanne quod he / the foule fend me fecche
 If I the excuse / though thow shuldest be spilt [leaf 85]
 Allas quod she / god wot I haue no gilt 1612
 Paie me quod he / or by the swete Seynt Anne
 As I wol bere a-wey / thy newe panne
 ffor dette / which þou owest me of olde
 Whan þou madest thyn husbonde / Cokewolde 1616

I paid at hom / for thyn correccion
 ¶ Thow lixt quod she / be myn saluacion
 Ne was I neuere or now / wydewe ne wyf
 Somound vn-to 3oure court / in al my lyf 1620
 Ne neuere I nas / but of my body trewe
 vn-to the deuele blak / & row of hewe
 3eue I thy body / and my panne also
 And whanne the deuele / herd hire cursen so 1624
 Vp-on hire knees / he seide in this manere
 Now Mabily / myn owen moder deere
 Is this 3oure wyll in earnest / that 3e seye
 The deuele quod she / so fecche him or he deye 1628
 And panne and al / but he wol him repente
 Nay olde stot / that is nat myn entente
 Quod this sompnour / for to repente me
 ffor ony thyng / that I haue had of the 1632
 I wold I had thy smok / and euery cloth
 Now brother quod the deuele / be nat wroth
 Thy body and this panne / ben myn be right
 Thow shalt to helle / with me / 3et to-nyght 1636
 There thow shalt knowen / of oure pryuate
 More than a Maister / of dyuynyte
 And with that word / this foul fend him hente
 Body and soule / he with the deuele wente 1640
 Where as theise Sompnoures / han here heritages
 And god that made / aftir his Image
 Man-kynde saue / and gyde / vs alle and some
 And leue this sompnour / good man to bycome 1644
 ¶ lordynggis I coude haue told 3ow / quod this ffrere
 had I had lesyer / for this sompnour heere
 After the tixt of crist / Poule and Iohn
 And of oure othere doctoures / many oon 1648
 Swiche peynes / that 3oure hertes myght a-gryse
 Al be it so / no tonge may it deuyse
 Though that I myght / a thousand wynter telle
 The peynes of that cursed hous / in helle 1652

But for to kepe vs / fro that cursed place
Waketh and preyeth / ihesu for his grace
So kepe vs / fro the temptour Sathanas
herkeneth this word / by-war as in this cas 1656
The lyon sitteth / in his wayte alwey
To slee the Innocent / if that he may
Disposeth ay 3oure hertis / to withistonde [leaf 85, back]
The fend / that 3ow wol make / thral & bonde 1660
he may nat tempten 3ow / ouer 3oure myght
ffor crist wol be 3oure champion / & 3oure knyght
And preyeth that theise Sompnours / hem repent
Of here misdedis / or that the fend hem hent 1664
¶ Hic desinit fabula fratris /

[on leaf 84, back]

Et incipit prologus Summonitoris

This Sompnour / in hise stiropes heye stode
 Vp-on this frere / his hert was so wode
 That like an Aspen lef / he quok for ire
 lordynggis quod he / but o thyng I desire 1668
 I 3ow byseche / that of 3oure curteisye
 Syn 3e han herd / this fals frere lye
 As suffreth me / I may my tale telle
 This frere hosteth / that he knoweth helle 1672
 And god it woot / that is but litel wonder
 ffreres and fendes / ben but lite asonder
 ffor parde / 3e han ofte tyme herd telle
 how that a frere / rauysshed was to helle 1676
 In spirit oones / by a vysion
 And as an Aungel / led him vp and down
 To shewen him / the peynes that there were
 In al that place / saw he nat a frere 1680
 Of othere folk / he saw I-nowe in woo
 vn-to this Aungel / spak this frere thoo
 ¶ Now sire quod he / han freres swich a grace
 That noone of hem / shal comen in this place 1684
 3is quod this Aungel / many a mylioun
 And vn-to Sathanas / he led him down
 And now hath Sathanas / seith he / a tayle
 Braddere than of a Caryk / is the sayle 1688
 hold vp thy tayl / thow sathanas quod he
 Shewe forth thyn Ars / and late the frere se
 Where is the nest / of freres in this place
 And er that half a furlong weye / of space 1692

Right so as Bees / out swarmen of an hyue
 Out of the Deueles Ars / they gonne dryue
 Twenty thousand freres / on a route
 And thurgh-out helle / they swarmed al a-boute 1696
 And comen a-geyn / as fast as they mouñ goñ
 And in his Ars / they crepten euerychoñ
 he clapte his tayl a-geyn / & lay full stille
 This frere / whan he loked had / his fille 1700
 vp-on the turmentes / of this sory place
 His spirit / god restored / of his grace [leaf 86]
 vn-to his body a-zein / and he a-woke
 But natheles / for feer / 3et he quoke 1704
 So was the deueles ars / ay in his mynde
 That is hise Eritage / of verrey kynde
 God saue 3ow alle / saue this cursed frere
 My prolog wol I ende / in this manere 1708

¶ Hic desinit prologus /

[on leaf 85]

Et incipit fabula

L ordyngges there is / in ȝorkshire as I gesse
 A mersshy contre / called Holdernesse
 In which there wente / a lymytour a-boute
 To preche and eke to begge / it is no doute 1712
 And so byfel / that on a day this frere
 Had preched at a chirche / in his manere
 And specially / a-bouen euery thyng
 Excited he the peeple / in his prechyng 1716
 To trentales / and to ȝeuen for goddis sake
 Where-with men myght / holy houses make
 There as diuine seruyse / is honoured
 Nat there as it is wasted / and deuoured 1720
 Ne there it nedeth nat / for to be ȝeue
 As to possessioneres / that moun lyue
 Thanked be god / in wele and habundaunce
 Trentals quod he / delyueren fro penaunce 1724
 here frendes soules / as wel old as ȝonge
 ȝa / whan that they ben / hastily I-songe
 Nat for to holden a prest / Ioly and gay
 he syngeth nat / but oo masse on a day 1728
 Delyuereth out a-non quod he / the soules
 fful hard it is / with flessshoke / or with owles
 To ben I-clawed / or to brenne or bake
 Now spede ȝow hastily / for cristes sake 1732
 And whan this frere / had seid al his entente
 With Qui cum patre / forth his weye he wente
 ¶ Whanne folk in chirche / had ȝeuen him what hem list
 he went his wey / no lengere wold he rest 1736

With skrippe and tipped staf / I-tukked heye
 In euery hous / he gan to poore and pryde
 And begged mele and chese / or ellis corn
 his felawe had a staf / typped with horn 1740
 A peyre of tables / al of yuory
 And a poyntel / polysshed fetialy
 And wrot the names alwey / as he stode
 Of alle folk / that 3af hem any good 1744
 A-scaunce that he wold / for hem preye
 3eue vs a busshel whete / malt or reye
 A goddis kechel / or a tryp of chese [leaf 86, back]
 Or ellis what 3ow list / we moun nat chese 1748
 A goddis halpeny / or a masse peny
 Or 3eue vs of 3oure brawne / if 3e haue eny
 A dagon of 3oure blanket / lef dame
 loo deere suster / heere wryte I 3oure name 1752
 Bacon or Beef / or swich thyng as 3e fynde
 ¶ A sturdy harlot / went hem ay behynde
 That was here hostis man / and bar a sak
 And that men 3af hem / leide it on his bak 1756
 And whan that he was / out at the dore / a-noon
 he planed a-wey / the names euerychoñ
 That he byforñ had wretyn / in his tables
 he serued hem with nyfles / and with fables 1760
 ¶ Nay there thow lixt / thow Sompnour quod the frere
 Pees quod oure host / for cristes moder deere
 Telle forth thy tale / and spare it nat at al
 So thryue I quod this sompnour / so I shal 1764
 So longe he went / fro hous to hous / til he
 Cam to an hous / there he was wont to be
 Refreshed moore / than in an hundred places
 Seke lay the bonde man / whos the place is 1768
 Bedred vp-on a couche / lowe he lay
 Deus hic quod he / O Thomas frend good day
 Seide this frere / curteisly and softe
 Thomas quod he / god 3elde 3ow / ful ofte 1772

haue I vp-on this benche / faren ful wele
 heere haue I eten / ful many a mery mele
 And fro the benche / he drof a-vey the cat
 And leide a-doun his potent / and his hat 1776
 And eke his skrippe / and sette him softe a-doune
 his felawe was gon / walked in to toun
 fforth-with his knaue / in-to that hostelrye
 Where as he shof him / thilke nyght to lye 1780
 O deere maister / quod this syke man
 how han 3e faren / syn that Marche bygan
 I saw 3ow nat / this fourtene nyght or more
 God wot quod he / laboured haue I sore 1784
 And specially / for thy saluacione
 haue I seid / many a precious orisone
 And for oure opere frendis / god hem bliasse
 I haue to-day ben / at 3oure chirche at messe 1788
 And seid a sermoun / to my symple wytte
 Nat al after the text / of holy wrytte
 ffor it is hard to 3ow / as I suppose
 And therfore wol I telle 3ow / al the glose 1792
 Glosyng / is a ful glorious thyng / certeyn
 ffor lettre sleeth / so as we clerkes seyn [leaf 87]
 There haue I taught hem / to be charitable
 And spende here good / there it is resonable 1796
 And there I saw oure dame / a where is she
 3onder in the 3erd / I trowe that she be
 Seyde this man / and she wyl come a-noon
 ¶ Ey Maister welcome be 3e / be Seynt Iohn 1800
 Seide this wyf / how fare 3e hertily
 The frere a-riseth vp / ful curteisly
 And hire embraceth / in his armes narwe
 And kist hire swete / and chirketh as a sparwe 1804
 With hise lippes / dame quod he right wel
 As he that is 3oure seruauant / euerydel
 Thanked be god / þat 3ow 3af soule and lyf
 3et saw I nat this day / so fair a wyf 1808

In al the chirche / god so saue me
 3e god amende defautes / sire *quod* she
 Algates wolcome be 3e / be my fay
 Graunt mercy dame / this haue I founde alway 1812
 But of 3oure greet goodnesse / be 3oure leuee
 I wolde preye 3ow / that 3e nat 3ow greeue
 I wol with Thomas / speke a litel throwe
 Theise curatours / ben so negligent / and slowe 1816
 To gropen tenderly / a conscience
 In shrift / in *prechyng* / is my diligence
 And studye / in Petres wordes / and in Poules
 I walke and fische / mennes soules 1820
 To 3elden ihesu crist / his *propre* rent
 To sprede his word / is sette al myn entent
 ¶ Now be 3oure leue / deere sire *quod* she
 Chideth him wele / for seynt charite 1824
 he is as angry / as a Pissemyre
 Though that he haue / al that he can desire
 Though I him wrye a nyght / & make him warme
 And ouer him leye / my legge and eke myn arme 1828
 he groneth lyke oure Boor / lith in oure sty
 Other disport of him / right noon haue I
 I may nat please him / in no maner caas
 O Thomas ieo vous dye / Thomas Thomas 1832
 This maketh the fend / this must ben amended
 Ire is a thyng / that heye god defended
 And ther-of wol I speke / a word or twoo
 Now maister *quod* the wyf / or that I goo 1836
 What wol 3e dyne / I wol go ther-about
 Now dame *quod* he / now ieo vous die saun3 doute
 haue I nat of a Capone / but the lyuere
 And of 3oure white bred / no but a shyuere 1840
 And after that / a rosted pygges hede [leaf 87, back]
 But that I nolde for me / no beest were dede
 Than had I with 3ow / homly sufficeaunce
 I am a man / of litel sustenaunce 1844

My spirit hath his fostrynge / in the bible
 My body is ay so redy / & so penyble
 To wake / that my stomak is destroyed
 I preye þow dame / that þe be nat a-noyed 1848
 Though I so frendly / þow my counseil shewe
 By god I nold han told it / but a fewe
 ¶ Now sire quod she / but a word or I goo
 My child is deed / with-inne theise wekes twoo 1852
 Sone after that þe went / out of this Toun
 ¶ his deth saw I / by reuelacioñ
 Seide this ffrere / at hom in oure dortour
 I dar wel seyn / that or half an houre 1856
 Aftir his deeth / I saw him born to blisse
 In myn aysione / so god me wysse
 So dide oure sexteyn / and oure ffermerer
 That han ben trewe freres / fifty þere 1860
 They moun now / god by thanked of his loue
 Maken here Iubilee / and walken allone
 And vp I roos / and al our couent eke
 With many a teer / trillynge on my cheke 1864
 With-uten noyse / and clateryng of belles
 Te Deum / was oure song / & nothyng elles
 Saue that to Crist / I bad an orison
 Thankyng him / of my reuelacioñ 1868
 ffor sire and dame / trosteth me right wele
 Oure orisons ben more / effectuele
 And more we sen / of Cristes secree thynges
 Than borel folk / al-though that they ben kynges 1872
 We lyue in pouert / and in abstinence
 And borel folk / in rychesse and in despence
 Of mete and drynk / and in here foule delyt
 We han this worldlis list / al in despyt 1876
 Lazar and Dyues / lyueden dyuersly
 And dyuers guerdoun / hadden ther-by
 Who so wol preye / he must fast and be clene
 And fatte his soule / and make his body leene 1880

We fare as seith the Appostel / cloth and food	
Suffiseth vs / though they be nat ful good	
The clenness and the fastynge / of vs freres	
Maketh that Crist / accepteth oure preyer	1884
loo Moyses / fourty dayes and fourty nyght	
ffasted / er that god ful of myght	
Spak with him / in the mounte of Synay	[leaf 88]
With empty wombe / of fastynge many a day	1888
Receyued he the lawe / that was wryten	
With goddes fynger / and Ely wel 3e wyten	
In Monte Oreb / or he had any speche	
With heye god / that is oure lyues leche	1892
he fasted longe / and was in contemplaunce	
Aron that had / the temple in gouernaunce	
And eke the othere prestis / euerychone	
In-to the temple / whan they shuld gone	1896
To preyen for the peeple / and do seruyse	
They nolde drynken / in no maner wyse	
No drynk / which that myght hem dronken make	
But there in abstinence / preye and wake	1900
leest that they dedyn take hede / what I seye	
But they be sobre / that for the peeple preye	
War that / I sey no more / for it suffiseth	
Oure lord ihesu / as holy wryt deuyseth	1904
3af vs ensauple / of fastynge and preyer	
Therfore we mendyuaunt3 / we sely freres	
Ben wedded to pouert / and to contynence	
To charite humblesse / and Abstinence	1908
To persecucione / for rightwysnesse	
To wepyng / misericorde / and clenness	
And therfore moun 3e se / that oure preyer	
I speke of vs / we mendyuaunt3 / we freres	1912
Ben to the heye god / more acceptable	
Than 3oures / with 3oure feestes / at the table	
ffro Paradys first / if I shal nat lye	
Was man out chased / for his glotonye	1916

And chast was man / in paradys certeyne
 But herkene now Thomas / that I shal seyne
 I haue no text of it / as I suppose
 But I shal fynde / in a maner glose 1920
 That specially / oure swete lord *Ihesus*
 Spak this by freres / whan he seide thus
 Blissed be they / that poere in spirit bene
 And so forth / al the gospel / may 3e sene 1924
 Wheither it be lykere / oure professione
 Or heres / that swymmen / in possessione
 ffly on hire pompe / and on here glotonye
 And of here lewednesse / I hem diffye 1928
 Me thynketh they ben lyke / to Iouynyan
 fiat as a whale / and walken as a swan
 Al vynolent / as a botle in the spence
 here preyere is / ful greet reuerence 1932
 Whan they for soules / seyn the psalme of Dauyd [11. 88, bk.]
 loo buf they seyn / Cor meum eructauit
 Who folweth Cristes gospel / and here fore
 But we that humble ben / and chaast and poore 1936
 Werkers of goddis word / nat auditours
 Therefore right as an hauke / vp-on a sours
 vp spryngeth in-to the Eyr / right so preyerer
 Of charitable and chaast / bisy freres 1940
 Maken here sours / to goddis Eres twoo
 Thomas Thomas / so mot I ride or goo
 And be that lord / that cleped is seynt Iue
 Nere thow oure brother / shuldest þou neuere thryue 1944
 In oure chapitre / preye we day and nyght
 To Crist / that he sende the / hele and myght
 Thy body / for to welden hastily
 God wot quod he / no thyng ther-of fele I 1948
 As helpe me god / as I in fewe 3eres
 haue spended / vp-on many dyuers freres
 fful many a pound / 3et fare I neuere the bette
 Certeyn my good / haue I almost bysette 1952

ffarewel my gold / for it is al a-go
 The frere answered / o Thomas dost þou so
 What nedeth the / dyuerse freres seche
 What nedeth him / that hath a parfyt leche 1956
 To sechen othere leches / in tovene
 3oure inconstaunce / is 3oure confusione
 holde 3e thanne me / and eke al oure couent
 To preye for 3ow / be insufficient 1960
 Thomas that iape / is nat worth a myte
 3oure maladye is / for we han to lyte
 A / 3eue that Couent foure and twenty grotes
 A / 3eue that Couent / half a quarter Otes 1964
 A / 3eue that frere / a peny and lat him goo
 Nay nay Thomas / it may no thyng be soo
 What is a ferthyng / worth / parted on twelue
 Loo / ech thyng that is oned / in him selue 1968
 Is more strong / than whan it is I-skatered
 Thomas of me / thow shalt nat ben I-flatered
 Thow woldest han oure labour / half for nought
 The heye god / that al this world hath wrought 1972
 Seith that the werkman / is worth his hyre
 Thomas nat of 3oure tresore / I desire
 As for my selue / but that al oure Couent
 To preye for 3ow / ben ay so diligent 1976
 And for to holden / Cristes owen chirche
 Thomas if 3e wyln lerne / for to werche
 Of beldynge / vp-on chirches / may 3e fynde
 If it be good / in Thomas lyf of Ynde [leaf 80] 1980
 3e lyn here ful of anger / and of Ire
 With which the deuete / setteth 3oure hert a-fyre
 And chiden heere / the sely Innocent
 3oure wyf / that is so meke and pacient 1984
 And therfore Thomas / trowe me if þou lest
 Ne stryue nat with thy wyf / as for the best
 And bere this word a-wey / now be thy feyth
 Touchyng swich thyng / lo what the wyseman seith 1988

With-Inne thyn hous / ne be þou no lyon
 To thyne suggestz / do non oppression
 Ne make thyn acqueyntaunce / nat to flee
 And Thomas / zet eftsones charge I the 1992
 Be war from hire / that in thy bosom slepeth
 War froo the serpent / that so slyly crepeth
 vnder the gras / and styngeth sotilly
 Be war my sone / and herkene paciently 1996
 That twenty thousand men / han lost here lyues
 ffor struyng with here lemmans / and here wyues
 Now syn 3e han / so holy meeke a wyf
 What nedeth 3ow / Thomas to maken strif 2000
 Ther nys I-wysse / no serpent so cruelle
 Whan a man tret vp-on his tail / ne half so felle
 As womman is / whan she hath caught an Ire
 vengeance is thanne / al that they desire 2004
 Ire is a synne on¹ / of the greete of¹ seuene <sup>[¹ on, of, overtime,
later.]</sup>
 Abhominable / to the god of heuene
 And to him self / it is destruccione
 This euery lewed vyker / or Persone 2008
 Gan seyn / how Ire / engendreth homycide
 Ire is in soth / executour of pryde
 I coude of Ire / seyn so mechil sorwe
 My tale shuld laste / til to-morwe 2012
 And þerfore preye I god / bothe day & nyght
 An Irous man / god sende him lital myght
 It is gret harm / and certes greet pitee
 To sette an Irous man / in heye degree 2016
 ¶ Whilom there was / an Irous potestate
 As seith Senek / that duryng his estate
 vp-on a day / out redyn knyghtes twoo
 And as fortune wolde / that it was so 2020
 That oon of hem cam hom / that othir nought
 A-noon the knyght / byfore the Iuge is brought
 That seide thus / thow hast thy felawe slayne
 ffor which I deme the / to the deth certayne 2024

And to a-nother knyght / comaunded he
 Go lede him to the deth / I charge the [leaf 89, back]
 And happed as they wenten / by the weye
 Toward the place / there he shuld deye 2028
 The knyght cam / which þat men wenden / had ben ded
 Than thoughten they / it were the best red
 To lede hem bothe / to the Iuge a-geyne
 They seiden lord / the knyght ne hath nat slayne 2032
 his felawe / heere he stant / hool a-lyue
 ¶ 3e shuln be deede quod he / so mote I thryue
 This is to seyn / bothe on two and three
 And to the first knyght / right thus spak he 2036
 I dampned the / thow must algate be deed
 And thow also / must nedes lese thyn hed
 ffor thow art cause / why thy felawe dyeth
 And to the thridde knyght / right thus he seith 2040
 Thow hast nat do / that I comaunded the
 And thus he dide / do slee hem alle three
 ¶ Irrous Cambises / was thus eke dronkelewe
 And ay delited him / to ben a shrewe 2044
 And so byfel / a lord of his meyne
 That loued vertuous / moralite
 Seide on a day / betwix hem two right thus
 A lord is lost / if he be vicious 2048
 And dronkenesse eke / is a foul recorde
 Of any man / and namely in a lorde
 There is ful many an eye / & many an ere
 A-waytynge on a man / he wot nat where 2052
 ffor goddis loue / drynketh more attemprely
 Wyn maketh a man / to leese wrecchedly
 hys mynde / & eke hise lymes euerychone
 ¶ The reuers shalt thow se / quod he a-none 2056
 And precue it / be thyn owen experience
 That wyn ne doth to folk no swich offence
 There is no wyn / byreueth me my myght
 Of hond ne foot / ne of myn eyen sight 2060

And for despyt / he drank ful mechel more
 An hundred part / than he had don byfore
 And right anon / this Irrous cursed wrecche
 This knyghtis sone / let byfore him fecche 2064
 Comaundyng he / he shulde byfore him stonde
 And sodeynly / he tok his bowe in honde
 And vp the stryng / he pulleth to his Ere
 And with an arwe / he slow the child right there 2068
 Now wheither haue I / a syker hand or noone
 Quod he / is al my myght / and mynde a-gone
 hath wyn byreued me / myn eyen sight
 What shulde I telle / the answeere of the knyght [leaf 90]
 His sone was slayn / there nys no more to seye 2073
 By war therfore / with lordes how 3e pleye
 Syngeth Placebo / and I shal if I can
 But if it be / vn-to a pore man 2076
 To a pore man / men shulde hise vices telle
 But nat to a lord / though he shulde go to helle
 ¶ loo / Irrous Cirus / thilk percien
 How destroyed he / the ryuer of Gyseñ 2080
 for that an hors of his / was dreynt there-Inne
 Whan that he went / Babylon to wynne
 he made that the Ryuer / was so smal
 That wommen myght / wade it oueral 2084
 lo / what seide he / that so wel teche can
 Ne be no felawe / to non Irous man
 Ne with no wood man / walke by the weye
 lest the repente / I wol no forthere seye 2088
 Now Thomas leue brother / leue thyn Ire
 Thow shalt me fynde / as Iust as is a squire
 holde nat the deuelis knyf / ay at thyn herte
 Thyn anger doth the / al to sore smerte 2092
 But shewe to me / al thyn confessione
 Nay quod this seke man / be seynt Symon
 I haue ben shreue this day / at myn curat
 I haue him told / holly al myn estat 2096

It nedeth no more / to speke of it seith he
 But if me liste / of myn humylitee
 ¶ 3eue me thanne of thy good / to make oure cloistre
 Quod he / for many a muscle and many an Oistre 2100
 Whan other men / han ben ful wel at eese
 hath ben oure fode / our cloistre for to reise
 And 3et god woot / vnethe the fundament
 Parfourmed is / ne of oure pauement 2104
 Is nat a tyle 3et / with-Inne oure wones
 By god we owen / fourty pound for stones
 Now help Thomas / for him þat harwed helle
 Or elles mote we / oure bookes selle 2108
 And if þou lakke / oure predicacion
 Than goth the world / al to destruccioñ
 ffor who so fro this world / wold vs byreue
 So god me saue Thomas / be 3oure leue 2112
 he wold byreue / out of this world the Sonne
 ffor who can teche and werken / as we conne
 And that is nat / of lytel tyme quod he
 But sithe Ely was / and Helysee 2116
 han freres ben / that fynde I of recorde
 In charitee / I-thanked be oure lorde
 Now Thomas help / for seynt charitee [leaf 90, back]
 And doun a-noon / he sette him on his knee 2120
 ¶ This syke man / wex ny wood / for Ire
 he wolde that the frere / had ben a-fire
 With his fals / dissimulacione
 Swich thyng as is / in myn possessione 2124
 Quod he / that may I 3eue 3ow & noon other
 3e seye me thus / how that I am 3oure brother
 ¶ 3a certes quod the frere / trosteth wel
 I toke oure dame / the lettre of oure seal 2128
 ¶ Now wel quod he / & sumwhat shal I 3eue
 vn-to 3oure Holy Couent / whil I lyue
 And in thyn hand / þou shalt it han a-noone
 On this condicione / and other noone 2132

That þou departe it / so / my dere brother
 That euery frere / haue as meche as other
 Thus shalt þou swere / on thy professione
 With-outen fraude / or cauellacione 2136
 ¶ I swere it quod the frere / vp-on my feith
 And ther-with-al / his hond in his he leith
 loo heere my feith / in me shal be no lak
 ¶ Thanne put thyn hand / adoun right be my bak 2140
 Seide this man / and grope wel behynde
 By-nethe my buttok / there shalt þou fynde
 A thyng that I haue / hid / in preuytee
 ¶ A thought this frere / that shal go with me 2144
 And doun his hand / he launched to the clift
 In hope / for to fynde there / a zift
 ¶ And whan this syke man / felt this frere
 Aboute his towel / gropen heere and there 2148
 Amydde his hand / he leet the frere a fart
 There is no capel / drawyng in a cart
 That myght han leet a fart / of swich a souñ
 ¶ The frere vp stirt / as doth a wood lyon 2152
 A fals cherl quod he / for goddis bones
 This hast þou for despyt / don for the nones
 Thow shalt a-bye / this fart if I may
 his meyne / which / þat herden swich a fray 2156
 Comen lepyng In / and chased out the frere
 And forth he goth / with a ful angry chere
 And fette his felawe / there as lay his stoor
 he loked as he were / a wylde Boor 2160
 And grynt with the teth / so was he wroth
 A sturdy paas / doun to the courte he goth
 Where as there woned / a man of gret honour
 To whom that he was / alwey confessour 2164
 This worthy man / was lord of that village [leaf 91]
 This frere cam / as he were in a rage
 Where as this lord / sat etyng at his bord
 vnethe myght the frere / speke a word 2168

Til at the laste / he seide god 3ow se
 This lord gan loke / and seide benedicite
 What frere Iohn / what maner world is this
 I se wel that sum thyng / there is amys 2172
 3e loken as the wode / were ful of theues
 Sitte down a-noon / and telle me / what 3oure gref is
 And it shal ben amended / if I may
 I haue quod he had / a despyt to-day 2176
 God 3elde it 3ow / a-doun in 3oure village
 That in this world / there nys so poere a page
 That he nold han / abhominacioñ
 Of that I haue resseyued / in the touñ 2180
 And zet ne greuesth it me / half so sore
 As that the olde charl / with lokkes hore
 Blasfemed hath / oure holy couent eke
 ¶ Now Maister quod this lord / I 3ow byseke 2184
 No Maister sire quod he / but seruytour
 Though I haue had / in scole that Honour
 God lyketh nat / that Raby men vs calle
 Neither in market / ne in 3oure large halle 2188
 No fors quod he / but telle me al 3oure greef
 Sire quod this frere / an odious meschef
 This day be-tid is / myn order and me
 And so par consequens / in ich degree 2192
 Of holy chirche / god amende it sone
 Sire quod the lord / 3e wot what is to done
 Distempre 3ow nat / 3e be my confessour
 3e be the salt of the erthe / and the sauour 2196
 ffor goddes loue / 3our pacience now holde
 Telle me 3oure greef / and he a-noon him tolde
 As 3e han herd byforñ / 3e wot wel what
 The lady of the hous / ay stille sat 2200
 Til she had herd / what the frere seide
 Ey goddis moder quod she / blisseful mayde
 Is there ought elles / telle me feithfully
 Madame quod he / how thynketh 3ow ther-by 2204

how þat me thynketh quod she / so god me spede
 I seye a cherl / hath doon a cherles dede
 What shulde I sey / god late him neuere thee
 his syke hede / is ful of vanytee 2208
 I holde him / in a maner fransye
 Madame quod he / by god I shal nat lye
 But I on other wyse / may be wreke [leaf 91, back]
 I shal deffame him / ouer al where I speke 2212
 The fals blasfemour / that charged me
 To parte / that wyl nat / departed be
 To euery man I-liche / with meschaunce
 The lord sat stille / as he were in a traunce 2216
 And in his herte / he rolleth vp and down
 how that this cherl had / ymaginacioun
 To shewe swich a probleme / to the frere
 Neuere erst er now / ne herd I swich matere 2220
 I trowe the deuere / put it in his mynde
 In ars metryk / shal there no man fynde
 By-forñ this day / of swich a question
 Who shulde make / a demonstracion 2224
 That euery man / shuld han lyke his part
 As of a soun / or of a sauour of a fart
 O nyce proud cherl / I shrewe his face
 lo sires quod the lord / with harde grace 2228
 Who euere herde / of swich a thyng or now [in another hand.]
 To euery man I-lyke / telleth me how
 It is an impossible / it may nat be
 Ey nyce cherl / god late him neuere the 2232
 The rumblynge of a fart / and euery soun
 Nis but of eyre / reuerberacione
 And there it wasteth / litel and litel a-wey
 There nys no man / can deme be my fey 2236
 If that it were / departed equally
 What lo my cherl / lo ȝet how shrewedly
 vn-to my confessour / to-day he spak
 I holde him certeyn / a demonyak 2240

Now ete ȝoure mete / and late the cherl go pleye
lat him go hange him self / a deuel weye

[*The Solution of the "Probleme" by the Lord's Squire.*

No break in the MS.]

¶ Now stod the lordes squyer / at his bord
That carf his mete / and herd word by word 2244
Of al this thyng / of which I haue ȝow seyde
My lord quod he / be ȝe nat euele a-paide
I coude telle / for a gowne cloth
To ȝow sire frere / so ȝe be nat wroth 2248
how that this fart / shulde euene deled be
Amonge ȝoure Couent / if it lyked me
Telle quod the lord / & thow shalt haue a-noon
A govne cloth / by god and by Seynt Iohn 2252
My lord quod he / whan that the wedir is fayre
With-outyn wynd / or pertourbyng of eyre [*in another hand.*]
lat brynge a Carte whel / heere in-to this halle
But loke that it haue / his spokes alle 2256
Twelue spokes hath a cart whel / comounly
And brynge me þazne twelue freres / wete ȝe why [*leaf 92*]
ffor threttene / is a couent / as I gesse
ȝoure confessoure heere / for his worthynesse 2260
Shal perfourme vp / the noumbre of this Couent
Than shuln they knele a-down / by oon assent
And to euery spokes ende / in this manere
fful sadly leyn his nose / shal a frere 2264
ȝoure noble confessour / there god him saue
Shal holde his nose vp-right / vnder the naue
Than shal this cherl / with bely stif and toughit
As any tabour / hedir ben I-brought 2268
And sette him on the whel / right of this cart
vp-on the naue / and make him late a fart
And ȝe shuln sen / vp perill of my lif
By preewe / which that is / demonstratif 2272

That equally / the sovne of it / wyl wende
 Ad eke the styngk / vn-to the spokes ende
 Saue that this worthy man / ȝoure confessour
 Bycause he is a man / of gret Honour 2276
 Shal han the first fruyt / as reson is
 The noble vsage of freres / ȝet is this
 The worthy men of hem / shuln first be serued
 And certeynly / he hath it wel deserued 2280
 he hath to-day taught vs / so mechil good
 With prechyng in the pulpyt / there he stod
 That I may vouche-saf / I seye for me
 he had the first smel / of fartes three 2284
 And so wold al his Couent / hardily
 he bereth him so fayre / and so holily
 ¶ The lord the lady / and eche man saue the frere
 Seyden that Iankyn / spak in this matere 2288
 As wel as Euclide / or protholome
 Towchyng the cherles / they seyden sotiltee
 An hey wyt / made him speke / as he spak
 he nys no fool / ne noo demonyak 2292
 And Iankyn hath I-wonne / a newe Govne
 My Tale is doon / we ben almost at Tovne ¶ *quod Wytton*

¶ *Hic finitur fabula Summonitoris /*

[*This was set from Dr. W. Aldis Wright's very accurate quarto print, but has been collated again with the MS.—F.*]

& incipit prologus clerici de Oxonia

Sire Clerk of Oxenford / oure Host sayde [leaf 92, back]
 3e ride as stille and coy / as dooth a mayde
 Were newe spoused / syttyng at the bord
 This day ne herd I / of 3oure tonge a word 4
 I trowe 3e studye / a-bouten som Sophyme
 But Salamon seith / þat euery thyng hath tyme
 For goddis sake / as beth of betre cheere
 It is no tyme / for to studyen heere 8
 Telle vs som mery tale / be 3oure feye
 For what man / that is entred / in a pleye
 He nedes must / vn-to the pley assent
 But preecheth nat / as freres don in lent 12
 To maks vs / for oure olde synnes wepe
 Ne that thy tale / make vs nat to slepe
 Telle vs sum mery¹ thyng / of auentures
 3oure termes / 3oure coloures / and figures 16
 Kepe hem in stoor / til so be / þat² 3e endite
 Heye stile / as whan þat men / to kynges wryte
 Spekith so playn / at this tyme / we 3ow preye
 That we moun vnderstonde / what that 3e seye 20
 ¶ This worthy Clerk / benygnely answered
 Host quod he / I am vnder 3oure 3erde
 3e han of vs / as now / the gouernaunce
 And therfore wold I do 3ow / obeisaunce 24

¹ mery added above the line.—W.

² þt added above.—W.

As fer as reson axeth / hardily
 I wold þow telle a tale / which that I
 lerned at Padowe / of a worthy Clerk
 As proued be his wordes / and his werk 28
 he is now deed / and nayled in his cheste
 I preye to god / so þene his soule reste
 Fraunceys Petrak / the laureat poete
 hyght this Clerk / whos Retoryk swete 32
 Enlumyned al Itaille / of Poetrye
 As lynyan dide / of Philosophye
 Or lawe / or other art particuler
 But deth that wol nat / suffren vs / dwellen heer 36
 But as it were / a twynkelynge of an eye
 hem bothe hath slayne / and alle shuln we deye
 But forth to tellen / of this worthy man
 That taught me this tale / as I began 40
 I seye / that first / he with heye¹ stile enditeth
 Or he the dety / of his tale wryteth
 A probleme / in the whiche / descryueth he
 Pemond and of Saluces / the contree 44
 And spekith of Appenym / the hilles heye
 That ben the boundes / of westlumbardye
 And of Mount vesulus / in speciale
 Where as the Poo / out of a welle smalle 48
 Taketh his first spryngyng / and his sours² [leaf 93]
 That Estward ay / encreasith in his cours
 To Emelie³ ward / To fferaro and venyse
 The which a long thyng were / to deuyse 52
 And trewely / as to my Iugement
 Me thynketh it a thyng / impartinent
 Saue he wole conueyen / his matere
 But this is the tale / which þat 3e mouñ heere. 56

¶ Hic desinit prologus /

¹ *his* corrected into *heye*.—W. ² *cours* corrected into *sours*.—W.

³ *Emele* corrected into *Emelie*.—W.

et incipit fabula Clerici de Oxonia :

- T**here is right at the west side / of ytaille ¶ *Inter cetera
ad radicem vesuli
terra Saluciarum
vicie & Castellie.*
 Doun at the rote / of vesulus the colde
 A lusty pleyn / habundaunt of vytaille ¶ *Grata planicies*
 Where many a Touñ & Tour / þou mayst byholde
 That founded were / in tyme of fadres olde
 And many a-nother / delitable syghit
 And Saluces / this noble contree hyghit 63
- ¶ A Markys whylom / lord was of that londe 64
 As were his worthy eldres / him byfore
 And obeissañt / ay redy to his honde
 Were alle hise lieges / bothe lesse and more 67
 Thus in delyt he lyueth / and hath doon ȝore
 Byloued and dred / thurgh fauour of fortune
 Bothe of his lordes / & of his Comune 70
- ¶ There-with he was / to speken of lynage 71
 The gentillest I-born / of lumbardye
 A fair persone and strong / and ȝong of age
 And ful of honour / and curteysye 74
 Discret I-now / his contree for to gye
 Saue in somme thynges / he was to blame
 And Walter¹ / was this ȝong lordes name 77
- ¶ I blame him thus / that he considered nought 78
 In tyme comyng / what myghit him betyde
 But on his lust present / was al his thought
 As for to hauke and hunte / on euery syde 81
 Wel ny / alle othere cures / leet he slide
 And eke he nolde / and that was werst of alle
 Wedde no wyf / for nought that myghit byfalle 84

¹ Originally Waulter, but the 'u' is erased.—W.

¶ Only that poynt / his peep̃le bar so sore	85
That flokmele on a day / to him they went	catenuatim
And oon of hem / that wysest was of lore	
Or elles / that the lord best / wolde assent	88
That he shulde telle him / what the peep̃le ment	
Or elles coude he shewe wel / swich mateer	
he to the Markys seyde / as 3e shuln heere	91
¶ O noble Markys / 3oure humanyte [leaf 93, bk.]	¶ tna inquit Humanitas op- time Marchio!
Assureth vs / and 3eueth vs hardynesse	
As ofte / as tyme is / of necessite	
That we to 3ow mow telle / oure heuynesse	95
Accepteth lord / thanne of 3oure gentilnesse	
That if we / with pytous hert / vn-to 3ow pleyne	
And lete 3oure Eeres / nat my voys desdeyne	98
¶ Al haue I nat to done / in this matere	99
More than a-nother man / hath in this place	
3et for-as-meche / as 3e / my lord so deere	
han alwey shewed me / fauour and grace	102
I dar the betre / aske of 3ow a space	
Of audience / to shewen oure request	
And 3e my lord / to don right as 3ow list	105
¶ For certes lord / so wel vs lyketh 3ow	106
And alle 3oure werke / and euere han don / that we	
Ne coude nat / oure self / deuysen how	
We mygh̃ten lyuen / in more felicite	109
Saue o thyng lord / if it 3owre wylle be	
That for to be / a wedded man / 3ow list	
Than were 3oure peep̃le / in souerayne hertis rest	112
¶ Boweth 3oure nekke / vnder that blisseful 3ok	113
Of Souereyntee / nought of seruise	
Which that men clepen / spousesle or wedlak	
And thynketh lord / a-mong 3oure thought̃es wyse	116

how that oure dayes / passe in sondry gyse
 For though we slepe or wake / or rome or ryde
 Ay fleeth the tyme / it wyl no man a-byde 119

¶ And though 3oure grene 3outhes / floure as 3et 120
 In crepeth age alwey / as stille as ston
 And deth manaceth euere age / and smyt
 In ech estate / for there eskapeth noon. 123
 And also certeyn / as we knowen echoñ
 That we shuln deye / and vncerteyne we alle
 Ben of that day / whan deth shal on vs falle 126

¶ Accepteth thanne of vs / the trewe entent 127
 That neuere 3et / refuseden 3oure heeste
 And we wyln lord / if that 3e wyln assent
 Chese 3ow a wyf / in short tyme at the leste 130
 Born of the gentillest / and of the meste
 Of al this lond / so that it ought seme
 honour to god and 3ow / as we can deme 133

¶ Delyuere vs out / of al this besi drede 134
 And take a wyf / for heye goddis sake
 For if it so byfel / as god for-bede
 That thurgh 3oure deth / 3oure lynage shuld slake 137
 And that a straunge successour / shuld take
 3oure heritage / O woo were vs on lyue [leaf 94]
 Wherefore we preye 3ow / hastily to wyue 140

¶ Here meke preyere / and here pytous chere 141
 Made the Markys hert / hane pytee
 3e wyln quod he / myn owen peeple deere
 To that I neuere erst thought / streyne me 144
 I me reioysed / of my liberte
 That selde tyme / is founde in mariage
 Ther I was free / I must ben in seruage 147

- ¶ But natheless / I see þoure trewe entent 148
 And troste vp-on þoure wyt / and haue don ay
 Wherfore of my free wyl / I wol assent
 To wedde me / as sone as euere I may 151
 But there as þe han / profred me to-day
 To chese me a wyf / I þow relese
 That choys / and prey þow / of that profre cese 154
- ¶ For god it wot / that children often been 155
 Vnlyke / here worthy elders / hem byfore
 Bounte cometh al of god / nat of the streen
 Of which / they ben I-gendred / and I-bore 158
 I troste in goddis bounte / and therfore
 My mariage / and myn estat and reste
 I hym bytake / he may do as him leste 161
- ¶ lat me a-lone / in chesyng of my wyf 162
 That charge vp-on my bak / I wol endure
 But I þow preye and charge / vp-on þoure lyf
 That what wyf that I take / þe me assure 165
 To worshiþe hire / whyle that hire lyf may dure
 In word and werk / bothe heere and euerywhere
 As she an Emperoures doughter / were 168
- ¶ And forthermore / this shuln þe swere / that þe 169
 A-geyn my choys / shuln neuere grucche ne stryue
 For syn I shal for-go / my libertee
 At þoure request / as euere mot I thryue 172
 There as myn hert is sette / there wol I wyue
 And but þe wyn assent / in swich manere
 I preye þow / speketh no more / of this matere 175
- ¶ With hertly wyl / they sworn and assenten 176
 To al this thyng / there seide no wyght nay
 Bysekyng him of grace / or þat they wenten
 That he wolde graunte hem / a certeyn day 179

Of his spousaille / as sone as euere he may.
 ffor ȝet alwey / the peeple sumwhat dredde¹
 lest that the Markys / no wyf wold wedde 182
 ¶ he graunted hem a day / swich as him list 183
 On which he wolde / be wedded sekerly
 And seide / he dide al this / at here request [leaf 94, back]
 And they with humble entent / ful buxumly 186
 Knelyng vp-on here knees / ful reuerently
 hym thanken alle / and thus they han an ende
 Of here entent / and hom a-geyn they wende 189
 ¶ And heere-vp-on / he vn-to hise officers 190
 Comaundeth / for the feest to purueye
 And to his pryue knightis / and Squyers
 Swich charge ȝaf / as him list on hem leye 193
 And they / to his comaundement / obeye
 And ech of hem dooth / al his diligence
 To don vn-to the feest / reuerence 196

¶ Prima pars [*in margin: no break in MS.*]

¶ Incipit pars Secunda " " "

Nought fer / fro thilke paleys / honorable ¶ *fluit haut procul*
 Where-as the Markys / shoþ his mariage *a palacio &c.*
 There stod a Thrope / of syght delitable
 In which / that poore folk / of that village 200
 hadden here beestes / and here herbergage
 And of here labour / token here sustenance
 After that the erthe / ȝaf hem habundaunce 203
 ¶ A-monges theise poore folk / there dwelt a man 204
 Which that was holden / poorest of hem alle
 But heye god / somtyme sende can
 his grace / in-to a litel Oxes stalle 207
 Ianycola / men of that Throþ him calle
 A doughter had he / fair I-now to sight
 And Grysildes / this ȝonge mayden hight 210

¹ *drede* in MS. corrected into *dredde*.—W.

- ¶ But for to speke / of vertuous beaute 211
 Than was she oon / of the fayrest vnder Sonne
 fful poorely / I-fostred vp / was she
 No lykerous lust / was in hire hert I-ronne 214
 Wel oftere of the welle / than of the Tonne
 She dranke / and for she wolde vertu plese
 She knew wel labour / but noon Idel eese 217
- ¶ But though this Mayde / tendre were of age 218
 3et in the breest / of hire virgynytee
 There was enclosed / ripe and sad corage
 And in gret reuerence / and charitee 221
 hire olde poore fader / fostred she
 A fewe shepe / spynnyng on the feld / she kepte
 She wolde nought / ben Idel / til she slepte 224
- ¶ And whan she homward cam / she wolde brynge 225
 Wortes / or other Erbes / tymes ofte
 The which she shredde / and seth for here lyuynge
 And mad hire bed ful hard / and no thyng softe 228
 And ay she kepte / hire fadres lyf on lofte
 with euery obeisaunce / and diligence
 That child may don / to fadres reuerence 231
- ¶ Vp-on Grisilde / this poore creature [leaf 95] 232
 fful often sithes / this Markys sette his eye
 As he on huntyng rod / perauenture
 And whan it fel / that he myght hire a-spye 235
 he nought / with wantoun lokyng / of folye
 his eyen cast on hire / but in sad wyse
 vp-on hir chere / he wold him oft avyse 238
- ¶ Commendynge in his hert / hire wommanhede 239
 And eke hire vertue / passyng any wyght
 Of so 3onge age / as wel in cheer as dede
 ffor though the peeple / haue no gret insyght 242

In vertue / he considered ful right
 hire bounte / and disposed that he wolde
 wedde hire oonly / if euere he wedde shulde 245

¶ The day of weddyng cam / but no wyght can 246
 Telle what womman / that it shulde be
 ffor which meruayle / wondreth many a man
 And seyden / whan they weren / in preuyte 249
 wyl nat oure lord / zet leuen his vanyte
 wyl he nat wedde / allas allas the whyle
 why wyl he thus / hym self / and vs begyle 252

¶ But nathelees this Markys / hath don make 253
 Of gemmes / sette in gold / and in Asure
 Broches and rynges / for Grisildes sake
 And of hire clothyng / toke he the mesure 256
 Of a mayden / lyke / vn-to hire stature
 And eke of othere / ornamentis alle
 That vn-to swich a weddyng / shulde falle 259

¶ The tyme of vnderne / of the same day 260
 Approcheth / that this weddyng / shulde be
 And al the paleys / put was in a-ray
 Bothe halle and chaumbres / eche in his degree 263
 houses of office / stuffed with plentee
 There maist þou se / of deynteuous vetaille
 That may be founde / as fer as lasteth ytaille 266

¶ This ryal Markys / richely arayed 267
 lordes and ladyes / in his companye
 The which / vn-to the feest / were I-preyed
 And of his retenue / the bachelerye 270
 With many a soun / of sondry melodye
 vn-to the village / of the which I tolde
 In this array / the right weye they holde 273

¶ Grisilde of this / god wot ful Innocent 274
 That for hire shapen was / al this array
 To fecchen water / at a welle is went
 And cometh hom / as sone as euere she may [leaf 95, back]
 For wel she had herd sey / that thilke day
 The Markys shuld wedde / and if she myght
 She wolde fayn han sen / som of that sight 280

¶ She thought I wyl / with othere Maydenes stonde [Latin note, p. 274.]
 That ben myne felawes / in oure dore and se
 The Markysesse / and therfore wol I fonde
 To do at hom / as sone as it may be 284
 The labour / which that longeth vn-to me
 And thanne I may / at leyser hire byholde
 If she this weye / vn-to the Castel holde 287

¶ And as she wolde / ouer the threswold gon 288
 The Markys cam / and gan hire for to calle
 And she sette down / hire watir pot a-noon
 Beside the threswold / in an oxes stalle 291
 And doun vp-on hire knees / she gan to falle
 And with sad countenaunce / knelith stille
 Til she had herd / what was the lordis wylle 294

¶ This thoughtful Markys / spak vn-to this mayde [Latin note, p. 274.]
 fful soberly / and seide in this manere
 Where is ȝoure fader / Grisildis he seyde
 And she with reuerence / in humble cheere 298
 Answered / lord / he is al redy heere
 And In she goth / with-uten lengere lette
 And to the Markys / she hire fader fette 301

¶ he by the hond / than toke this poore man 302
 And seide thus / whan he him had a-syde
 Ianycula / I neyther may ne can
 lengere the plesaunce / of myn hert hyde 305

If that thow vouchesaf / what so betyde
Thy doughter wol I take / er that I wende
As for my wyf / vn-to hire lyues ende 308

¶ Thow louest me / that wot I wel certeyn 309
And art my feithful leige man / I-bore
And al that lyketh me / I dar wel seyn
It lyketh the / and specially therfore 312
Telle me that poynt / that I haue seid byfore
If that thow wylt / vn-to that purpos drawe
To take me / as for thyn sone in lawe 315

¶ This sodeyn caas / the man a-stoynd so 316
That red he wex a-baist / and al quakyng
he stod / vnethe seide he wordes moo
But oonly thus / lord quod he my wyllynge 319
Is as 3e wole / ne a-3eyns 3oure likynge
I wyl no thyng / myn owen lord so deere
Ryght as 3ow lyst / gouerneth this matere 322

¶ 3et wol I / quod this Markys softly [leaf 96] 323
That in thy chaumbre / I and thow and she
haue a colacione / and wost thow why
ffor I wol aske / if it hire wyl be 326
To be my wyf / and reule hire after me
And al this shal be don / in thy presence
I wol nat speke / out of thyn audyence 329

¶ And in the Chaumbre / while they were a-boute 330
here tretet / which as 3e shuln after heere
The peple cam / in-to the hous with-oute
And wondred hem / in how honest manere 333
Ententify / she kept hire fader dere
But vtterly / Grisildis wondir myght
ffor neuere erst / ne saw she / swich a sight 336

- ¶ No wonder is / though that she were a-stoned ¶ *Et insolito
tanti hospitii
aduentu
stupidam
inuenit!*
To se so gret a gest / come in-to that place
She neuere was / to swich gestes woned
ffor which she loked / with ful pale face 340
But shortly / forth / this matere for to chace
Theise arn the wordes / that the Markys seyde
To this benygne / verray feithful Mayde 343
- ¶ Grisilde he seide / 3e shuln wel vnderstonde [*Latin note,
p. 274.*]
It lyketh to 3oure fader / and to me
That I 3ow wedde / and eke it may so stonde
As I suppose / 3e wol that it so be 347
But this demaunde / aske I first quod he
That syn it shal be don / in hasty wyse
Wol 3e assent / or ellis 3ow a-vyse 350
- ¶ I seye this / be 3e redy with good hert 351
To al my lust / and that I freely may
As me best thynketh / do 3ow laughie or smert
And neuere 3e to¹ grucche it / nyght ne day ¶ *Nota bene
[Latin note, p. 274.]*
And eke whan I sey 3a / 3e sey nat nay
Neither be word / ne frounyng countenaunce
Swere this / and heere I swere oure alliaunce 357
- ¶ Wondrynge vp-on this thyng / quakyng for drede 358
She seyde / lord / vn-digne and vnworthy [*Latin note, p. 274.*]
Am I / to thilke honour / that 3e me bede
But as 3e wol 3oure self / right so wol I 361
And heere I swere / that neuere wyllingly
In werk ne thought / I nyl 3ow disobeye
ffor to be deed / though me were loth to deye 364
- ¶ This is I-now / Grisilde myn quod he 365
And forth he gooth / with a ful sobre cheer
Out at the dore / and after that cam she
And to the peeples he seide / in this manere 368

¹ to inserted above the line.—W.

This is my wyf *quod* he / that stondeþ heere
 Honoureþ hire / and loueth hire I preye [leaf 96, back]
 Who so me loueth / there is no more to seye 371

¶ And for that no thyng / of hire olde gere [Latin note, p. 274.]
 She shulde brynge / in-to his hous / he bad
 That wommen shulde / dispoilen hire right there
 Of which theise ladyes / weren no thyng glad 375
 To handle hire clothes / where-Inne she was clad
 But natheles / this mayden bright of hewe
 fro foot to hede / they clothed han al newe 378

¶ Hire heres they kemed / that leyn vntressed 379
 ful rudely / and with here fyngeris smale
 A corone on hire hede / they han I-dressed
 And sette hire ful / of Ouches grete & smale 382
 Of hire array / what shulde I make a tale
 vnethe the peple hire knew / for hire fairnesse
 Whan she transmeeyd was / in swich richesse 385

¶ This Markys / hath hire spoused / with a rynge 386
 Brought for the same cause / and thanne hire sette
 vp-on an hors / snow whyte / & wel aumblynge
 And to his Paleys / er he lengere lette 389
 With ioyeful peeples / that hire lad and mette
 Conveyed hire / and thus the day they spende
 In reuel / tyl the Sonne gan descende 392

¶ And shortly forth / this mater for to chace 393
 I seye / that to this newe / Markysesse
 God hath swich fauour sent hire / of his grace
 That it ne semed nought / by lyknesse 396
 That she was born and fed / in rudenesse
 As in a Cote / or in an Oxes stalle
 But norisshed / in an Emperoures halle 399

¶ To euery wyght / she wexen is so deere [*Latin note*, p. 274.]
 And worshipful / that folk there she was bore
 And from hire birthe / knewen hire ȝere by ȝere
 vnethe trowed they / but durst han swore 403

That to Ianicle / of which I spak byfore
 She doughter were / for as by coniecture
 hem thought she was / a-nother creature 406

¶ ffor though that euere / vertuous was she 407
 She was encreased / in swich excellence
 Of thewes goode / I-sett in hey bounte
 And so discreet / and fair of eloquence 410
 So benygne / and so digne of reuerence
 And coude so / the peeples hertes embrace
 That ech hire loueth / that loked in hire face 413

¶ Nat onoly of Saluces / in the toun 414
 Publisshed was / the bounte of hire name
 But eke beside / in many a Region [*leaf 97*]
 If on seith wel / a-nother seith the same 417
 So spredeth / of hire heye bounte / the fame
 That men & wommen / as wel ȝonge as olde
 Gon to Saluces / vp-on hire to byholde 420

¶ Thus Walter lowely / nay but really [*Latin note*, p. 274.]
 Wedded / with fortunat honestete
 In goddis pees / lyueth ful esily
 At hom / and grace I-now outward had he 424
 And for he saw / that vnder lowe degree [*Latin note*, p. 274.]
 Was often vertue hid / the peeples him helde
 A prudent man / and that is sen ful selde 427

¶ Nat onoly this Grisildis / thurgh hire wytte [*Latin note*, p. 274.]
 Coude al the feet / of wyfly humblenesse
 But eke whan that the cass / requered ytte
 The comune profyt / coude she redresse 431

There nas discord / rancour ne heynesse
 In al that lond / that she ne coude appese
 And wysely brynge hem alle / in reste and ease 434

¶ Though that hire husbonde / absent were or noon 435
 If gentil men / or othere of the contree [Latin note, p. 274.]
 Weren wrothe / she wolde brynge hem at oon
 So wyse / and ripe wordes / had she 438
 And Iuggement; / of so grete equitye
 That she from heuene / sent was / as men wende
 Peeple to saue / and euery wrong to amende 441

¶ Nought longe tyme after / that this Grisilde 442
 Was wedded / she a doughter hath I-bore
 Al had hire leuere / han born a knaue childe
 Glad was this Markys / and his folk therfore 445
 ffor though a mayden child / come al byfore
 She may vn-to a knaue child / atteyne
 Be lyklihed / syn she nys nat bareyne 448

¶ Secunda pars [*in margin: no break in MS.*]

¶ Incipit pars tercia „ „ „

¶ There fel / as it byfalleth tymes moo [Latin note, p. 274.] 449
 Whan that this child / hath souked but a throwe
 This Markys in his hert / longeth so
 To tempte his wyf / hire sadnesse for to knowe 452
 That he ne myght / out of his hert throwe
 This merueillous desir / his wyf to assaye
 Natheless god wot / he thought hire for to affraye 455
 ¶ he had assayed hire / I-now byfore 456
 And fond hire euere good / what nedeth it
 hire for to tempte / and alwey more and more
 But as for me I seye / that euyl it sitte 459
 Though summe men preyse it / for a sotil wyt [leaf 97, back]
 To assaye a wyf / whan that it is no nede
 And putten hire / in angwyssh and in drede 462

- ¶ ffor which this Markys / wrought in this manere 463
 he cam a nyght a-lone / there as she lay
 With sterne face / and with ful trouble cheere
 And seide thus / Grisilde quod he / that day 466
 That I 3ow toke / out of 3oure poore array
 And putte 3ow in estat / of heigh noblesse
 3e han it nat forgeten / as I gesse 469
- ¶ I seye Grisilde / this present dignitee 470
 In which that I haue put 3ow / as I trowe
 Maketh 3ow nat / forgeteful for to be
 That I 3ow toke / in poore estat / ful lowe 473
 For any wele / 3e mot 3oure seluen knowe
 Take hede / of euery word / that I 3ow seye
 There nys no wyght / that herith it but we tweye 476
- ¶ 3e wot 3oure self wel / how that 3e cam heere 477
 In-to this hous / it is nat longe a-goo
 And though to me / that 3e be leef and deere
 Vn-to my gentiles / 3e be no thyng soo 480
 They seyn to hem / it is gret shame and woo
 For to be suggettes / and ben in seruage
 To the / that born art / of a smal lynage 483
- ¶ And namely / sithe thy doughter was I-bore 484
 Theise wordes han they spoken / doutelees
 But I desire / as I haue don byfore
 To lyue my lif with hem / in reste and pees 487
 I may nat in this caas / be rechelees
 I mot don with thy doughter / for the beste
 Nat as I wolde / but as myne gentiles liste 490
- ¶ And 3et god wot / this is ful loth to me 491
 But nathelees / with-uten 3oure wetynge
 I wyl nat don / but this wol I quod he
 That 3e to me assenten / as in this thyng 494

Shewe now þoure pacience / in þoure werkynge
That ȝe me hight / and swor in þoure village
That day that maketh was / oure mariage 497

¶ Whan she had herd al this / she nought a-meeued 498
Neither in word / chere ne countenance ¶ *Nec verbo mota
nec vultu*
For as it semed / she was nought a-greued
She seide lord / al liȝh in þoure plesaunce 501
My child and I / with hertly obeysaunce
Ben þoures alle / and ȝe moun saue or spille
þoure owen thyng / werketh after þoure wyll 504

¶ There may no thyng / so god my soule saue [leaf 98] 505
lykyng to ȝow / that may displese me
Ne I desire / no thyng for to haue
Ne drede for to lese / saue oonly ȝe 508
This wyl is in myn hert / and ay shal be
No lengthe of tyme / or deth / may this deface
Ne chaunge my corage / to a-nother place 511

¶ Glad was this Markys / of hire answerynge 512
But ȝet he feyned / as he were nat so
Al drery was his chere / and his lokynge
Whan that he shulde / out of the chaumbre goo 515
Sone after this / a furlonge weye or twoo
he preuily hath told / al his entente
Vn-to a man / and to his wyf him sente 518

¶ A maner of a Sergeaunt / was this pryue man 519
The which he feithful / often founden had
In thynges greete / and eke swich folk wel can
Don execucion / on thynges badde 522
The lord knew wel / that he him loued and dradde
And whan this sergeaunt / knew his lordes wyll
In-to the chaumbre / he stalketh him ful stille 525

¶ Madame he seide / 3e mot for-gene it me 526
 Though I do thyng / to which I am constreyned
 3e ben so wys / that right wel knowen 3e
 That lordes hestes / moun nat ben feyned 529
 They moun wel ben bewilled / or compleyned
 But men must nedes / to here lust obeye
 And so wol I / there nys no more to seye 532

¶ This child am I / comaunded for to take 533
 And spak no more / but out the child he hent
 Dispetously / and gan a cher make
 As though he wolde / han slayn it / or he went 536
 Grisildis mot al suffre / and al consent
 And as a lomb / she sitteth meke and stille
 And leet this cruel Sergeaunt / don his wille 539

¶ Suspecious was the diffame / of this man ¶ Suspecta viri
 Suspect his face / suspect his word also fama / Suspecta
 Suspect the tyme / in which he this bygan factos suspecta
 Allas hire doughter / that she loued so hora / suspecta
 She wende he wolde / han slayn it right thoo erat oratio:
 But natheless / she neither wep ne syked
 Conformynge hire / to that the Markys lyked 546

¶ But at the laste / to speken she bygan 547
 And mekely she / to the sergeaunt preyede
 So as he was / a worthy gentil man
 That she must kysse hire child / er that it deyede 550
 And in hire arm / this litel child she leyde
 With ful sad face / and gan the child to blisse [leaf 98, back]
 And lulled it / and after gan it kysse 553

¶ And thus she seide / in hire benygne vois 554
 Fare wel my child / I shal the neuere se
 But sithe I haue the marked / with the crois
 Of thilke fader / I-blissed mot thow be 557

- That for vs deyed / vp-on a cros of tree
 Thy soule litel child / I him betake
 For this nyght / shalt þou dyen for my sake 560
- ¶ I trowe that to a Norice / in this caas 561
 It had ben hard / this reuthe for to se
 Wel myght a moder thanne / han cried allas
 But nathelees / so sad and stedefast was she 564
 That she endured / al aduersitee
 And to the Sergeaunt / mekely she seyde
 haue heere a-geyn / 3oure litel 3ong mayde 567
- ¶ Goth now quod she / and doth my my lordes heste 568
 But o thyng wold I preye 3ow / of 3oure grace
 That but my lord / forbad 3ow at the leste
 Berieth this litel body / in sum place 571
 That beestes ne no briddes / it to-race
 But he no word / wolde to the purpos seye
 But toke the child / and went vp-on his weye 574
- ¶ This Sergeaunt cam / va-to his lord a-geyn 575
 And of Grisildis wordes / and of hire chere
 he told him poynt for poynt / in short and pleyn
 And him presenteth / with his doughter dere 578
 Sumwhat this lord / hath reuthe in his manere
 But nathelees / his purpos held he stille
 As lordes don / whan they wyln han here wille 581
- ¶ And bad this Sergeaunt / that he preunly 582
 Shulde this child ful softe / wynde and wrappe
 With alle the circumstaunce3 / tenderly
 And carie it in a coffre / or in a lappe 585
 But vp-on payne / his hede of for to swappe
 That no man shulde knowe / of this entent
 Ne whens he cam / ne whider that he went 588

¶ But at Boloigne / to his Suster deere 589

That thilke tyme / of Paup was Contesse

he shuld it take / and shewe hire this matere

Bysekynge hire / to don hire besynesse 592

This child to fostren / in al gentillesse

And whos child that it was / he bad hire hyde

From euery wyght / for ought that may betide 595

¶ The Sergeaunt goth / and hath fulfilled this thyng 596

But to the Markys / now retourne we

For now goth he / ful fast ymaginyng

If by his wyues chere / he myght se [leaf 99] 599

Or by hire word / a-perceyue that she

Were chaunged / but he neuere coude hire fynde

But euere in oon / I-lyke / sad and kynde 602

¶ As glad as humble / as bysy in seruyce ¶ per alacritas atque

And eke in loue / as she was wont to be sedulitas solitum ob-

Was she to him / in euery maner wyse sequitur idem amor

Ne of hire doughter / nought a word spak she 606

Noon accident / for noon aduersite

Was seen in hire / ne neuere hire doughter name

Ne nempned she / in earnest ne in game 609

¶ Tercia pars desinit [*in margin: no break in MS.*]

Et Incipit pars .4^{ta}.

„ „ „

¶ In this estate / there passed ben foure ȝere ¶ Transierant

Er she with childe was / but as god wole hoc in statu

A knaue child she bar / be this wantere anni. 4. dum

fful gracious / and fair for to beholde ecce grauida

And whan that folk / it to his fader tolde & c' / 613

Nat oonly he / but al his contree merye

Was for this child / and god they thanke & herye 616

¶ Whan it was two ȝer olde / and fro the breste 617

Departid of his norice / vp-on a day

This Markys caught ȝet / a-nother lyste

To tempte his wyf / ȝet oftere if he may 620

O nedlees / was she tempted in assay

But wedded men / ne knowe no mesure ¶ Nota

Whan that they fynde / a pacient creature 623

¶ Wyf quod this Markys / ȝe han herd or this ¶ Et olim ait
audisti populum

My peeples sekerly / beren oure mariage meus gre

And namely / sithen my sone / I-born is nostrum ferre

Now is it werse / than euere in al oure age 627

The murmur sleeth myn herte / & myn corage

For to myn Eres / cometh the voys so smerte

That it wol ny / destroyed hath myn herte 630

¶ Now sey they thus / whan wauter is a-noon 631

Than shal the blode / of Ianicle succede

And be oure lord / for other han we noon

Swich wordes seyn my peeples / it is no drede 634

Wel ought I / of swich murmur / take hede

For certeynly / I drede / swich sentence

Though they nouȝt pleyne & speke / in myn audience 637

¶ I wolde lyue in pees / if that I myȝht 638

Wherfore / I am disposed / vtterly

As I his Suster / serued be nyȝht

Right so thynke I / to serue him preuly 641

This warne I ȝow / for ȝe nat sodeynly

Out of ȝoure selue / for no woo shulde outraye

Beth pacient / and ther-of I ȝow preye [leaf 99, back] 644

¶ I haue quod she / seid thus / and euere shal 645

I wol no thyng / ne nyl no thyng certeyn

But as ȝow list / nouȝht greueth me at al

Though that my doughter / & my sone be slayn 648

At ȝoure comaundement / that is to slayn [sic]

I haue nouȝht had no part / of children tweyne

But first sykenesse / and after woo and peyne 651

¶ 3e be my lord / doth with 3oure owyn thyng 652
 Right as 3ow list / asketh no reed of me
 For as I left at home / al my clothyng
 Whan I first cam to 3ow / right so quod she 655
 Lefte I my wyll / and my liberté
 And toke 3oure clothyng / wherfore I 3ow preye
 Doth 3oure plesaunce / I wol 3oure lust obeye 658

¶ And certes if I had had / prescience ¶ *¶ Fac sentiam*
 3oure wyl to knowe / or 3e 3oure lust me tolde *tibi placere*
 I wold it don / with-uten negligence *quod moriar*
 But now I wot 3oure lust / and what 3e wolde 662
 Al 3oure plesaunce / ferme and stable I holde
 For wyst I / that my deth / myght do 3ow eese
 Right gladly wold I deye / 3ow to please 665

¶ Deth may nat make / no comparisone 666
 Vn-to 3oure loue / and whan this Markys say
 The constaunce of his wyf / he cast a-doune
 hise eyen two / and wondreth that she may 669
 In pacience suffre / al this array
 And forth he goth / with drery countenaunce
 But to his herte / it was right gret plesaunce 672

¶ This vgly Sergeaunt / in the same wyse 673
 That he hire daughter caught / right so he
 Or werse / if men can werse deuyse
 hath hent hir sone / that ful was of beaute 676
 And euere in oone / so pacient was she
 That she no chere made / of heuynesse
 But kyst hire sone / and after gan him blisse 679

¶ Saue this she preyed him / if that he myght 680
 hire lytel sone / he wolde in erthe graue
 hise tendre lymes / delicat to sight
 ffro foules and fro bestes / for to saue 683

But she noon answerē / of him myght haue
 He went his way / as him no thyng ne roughȝt
 But to Boloigne / he it tenderly brought 686

¶ This Markys wondreth / euere lengere the more 687
 Vp-on hire pacience / and if that he
 Ne had sothly / knowen ther byfore
 That parfytylly / hire children loued she [leaf 100] 690
 he wolde han wende / that of som sotiltee
 And of malice / or for cruel corage
 That she had suffred this / with sad visage 693

¶ But wel he knew / that next him self certeyn 694
 She loued hire children best / in euery wyse
 But now of wommen / wold I asken fayn
 If theise assayes / myght nat suffise 697
 What coude a sturdy husbonde / more deuyse
 To preue hire wyfhode / and hire stedfastnesse
 And he contynuyng / euere in sturdynesse 700

¶ But there be folk / of swich condiciō 701
 That whan they han / a certeyn purpos take
 They conne nat stynt / of here entencion
 But right as they were bounden / vn-to a stake 704
 They wyl nat / of that first purpos slake
 Right so this Markys / fullich hath purposed
 To tempte his wyf / as he was first disposed 707

¶ He wayteth / if by word / or countenaunce 708
 That she to him / was chaunged of corage
 But neuere coude he fynde / variaunce
 She was ay oon / in hert and in visage 711
 And ay the ferthere / that she was in age
 The more trewe / if that it were possible
 She was to him / in loue / and more penyble 714

- ¶ For which it semed thus / that of hem two 715
 There nas but oo wyl / for as Walter lest
 The same lust / was hire pleasaunce also
 And god by thanked / as fel for the best 718
 She shewed wel / for no worldly vnrest
 A wyf as of hire self / no thyng ne shulde
 Wylñ in effect / but as hire husbonde wolde 721
- ¶ The sclaunder of Wautere / ofte and wyde sprad 722
 That of cruel herte / he wykkedly
 For he / a pore womman / wedded had
 hath mordred / bothe hise children preuily 725
 Swich murmur / was a-mong hem comounly
 No wonder is / for to the peeples Ere
 There cam no word / but that they mordred were 728
- ¶ For which / there as his peeples ther byfore ¶ *Ceperit sen-*
 had loued him wel / the sclaunder of his defame *sum de Waltero*
 Mad hem / that they him hated therfore *decolor fama*
 To ben a morthere / is an hateful name 732 *crebescere :—*
 But natheless / for ernest or for game
 he of his cruel purpos / nold he stynt
 To tempte his wyf / was sette al his entent [leaf 100, bk.] 735
- ¶ Whan that his doughter / twelue yer was of age 736
 he to the courte of Rome / in subtyl wyse
 Enformed of his wyl / sent his message
 Comaundyng hem / swich bulles to deuyse 739
 As to his cruel purpos / may suffise
 How that the Pope / as for his peeples reest
 Bad him to wedde / a-nother if him list 742
- ¶ I sey he bad / they shulde countrefete 743
 The Popes bulles / makyng mencion
 That he hath leue / his first wyf to lete
 As by the Popes / dispensacioñ 746

To stynte rancour / and discencion
 Be-twix his peeples & him / thus seide the bulle
 The which they han / publisshed at the fulle 749

¶ The¹ rude peeples / as¹ it no wondir is [¹ The, as, corrected
in later hand.—W.]
 Wende ful wele / that it had ben right so
 But whanne theise tidynggis / comen to Grisildis
 I deme / that hire herte / was ful woo 753
 But she e-lyke sad / for euere moo
 Disposid was / this humble creature
 The aduersite of fortune / al to endure 756

¶ A-bidyng euere his lust / and his plesaunce 757
 To whom that she was ȝeuen / hert and al
 As to hire verray worldly / suffisaunce
 But shortly / if I this story / tellen shal 760
 This Markys / wryten hath in special
 A *lettre* / in which he sheweth / his entent
 And secretly / he to Boloigne / it sent 763

¶ To the Erl of Pauyk / which that hadde tho 764
 Wedded his Suster / preyed he specially
 To bryngen hom a-geyn / hise children two
 In honourable estat / al openly 767
 But oo thyng he him preyed / vtterly
 That he to no wyght / though men wolde enquire
 Shulde nat telle / whos children that they were 770

¶ But seyn that the mayden / shulde wedded be 771
 Vn-to the Markys / of Saluce a-noon
 And as this Erl was preyed / so dide he
 For at the day sette / he on his wey is gon 774
 And forth he rod / ful fast a-noon
 Toward Saluce / this Mayde for to gyde
 hire ȝonge brother / ridyng hire besyde 777

¶ Arrayed was / toward hire mariage 778
 This fresah May / ful of gemmes clere
 Hire brother which / that Seuene 3er was of age [leaf 101]
 Arayed eke ful fresah / in his manere 781
 And thus in gret noblesse / and with glad chere
 Toward Saluces / shapyng here Iourney
 Fro day to day / they ryden in here wey 784

¶ Explicit quarta pars [*in margin: no break in MS.*]

¶ Incipit pars quinta: " " "

¶ A mong al this / after his wykked vsage 785
 This Markys / 3et his wyf to tempte more
 To the outrest preus / of hire corage
 ffully / to haue / experience and lore 788
 If that she were / as stedefast as byfore
 he on a day / in open audience
 fful boistously / hath seid hire / this sentence 791

¶ Certes Grisilde / I had I-now plesaunce 792
 To haue 3ow to my wyf / for 3oure goodnesse
 As for 3oure trouthe / and for 3oure obeysaunce
 Nought for 3oure lynage / ne for 3oure richesse 795
 But now knowe I / in verray sothfastnesse
 That in gret lordshīp / if I me wel auyse
 There is gret seruitute / in sondry wyse 798

¶ I may nat do / as euery plowman may 799
 My peeples constreyneth me / to take
 A-nother wyf / and crien day be day
 And eke the Pope / rancour / for to slake 802
 Consenteth it / that dar I vndertake
 And trewely / thus meche / I wyl 3ow sey
 My newe wyf / is comyng by the wey 805

¶ Be strong of hert / and voide a-noon hire place 806
 And thilke dower / that 3e broughten me
 Take it a-geyn / I graunt it of my grace

Returneth to ȝoure fadres hous / quod he	809
Noman may alwey / haue prosperite	
With euen hert / I rede ȝow to endure	
The stroke of fortune / or of auenture	812
¶ And she a-geyn answered / in pacience	813
My lord quod she / I wot and wyst alwey	
how that bytwene / ȝoure magnificence	
And my pouerte / no wyght ne can ne may	816
Maken comparisoñ / it is no nay	
I ne held me neuere digne / in no manere	
To be ȝoure wyf / ne ȝoure chaumbrere	819
¶ And in this hous / there ȝe me lady made	820
The heye god take I / for my wytnesse	
And also wysly / he my soule glade	
I neuere held me lady / ne maistresse	823
But humble seruaunt / to ȝoure worthynesse	
And euere shal / while þat my lyf may dure	
A-bouen euery / worldly creature	[leaf 101, back] 826
¶ That ȝe so longe / of ȝoure benignite	827
han holden me / in honour and nobley	
Where as I was / nought worthy for to be	
That thanke I god / and ȝow / to whom I prey	830
ffor-ȝelde it ȝow / there is no more to sey	
Vn-to my fader / gladly wol I wende	
And with him dwelle / vn-to my lyues ende	833
¶ There I was fostered / of a child ful smal	834
Til I be dede / my lyf there wol I lede	
A wydewe clene / in body hert and al	
And siþe I ȝaf to ȝow / my maydenhede	837
And am ȝoure trewe wyf / it is no drede	
God shilde / swich a lordes wyf / to take	
A-nother man / to husbonde or to make	840

- ¶ And of þoure newe wyf / god of his grace 841
 So graunte þow welthe / and prosperite
 for I wol gladly / ȝelden hire my place
 In which that I was / blisful wont to be 844
 For siþe it liketh þow / my lord quod she
 That whilom weren / al myn hertis rest
 That I shal gon / I wyl go whan þow list 847
- ¶ But there as ȝe me *profre* / swich doware 848
 As I first brought / it is wel in my mynde
 It were my wreched clothes / no thyng faire
 The which to me / were hard now for to fynde 851
 O goode god / how gentyl and how kynde
 ȝe semed by þoure speche / and þoure vysage
 The day / that maked was / oure mariage 854
- ¶ But soth is seid / algate I fynde it trewe 855
 For in effect / it preued is on me
 loue is nought old / as whan that it is newe
 But certes lord / for noon aduersitee 858
 To deye in this cas / it shal nat be
 That euere in word or werk / I shal repent
 That I ȝow ȝaf myn hert / in hole entent 861
- ¶ My lord ȝe wot / that in my fadres place 862
 ȝe dide me stripe / out of my poore wede
 And richely me clad / of þoure grace
 To þow brought I nat ellis / out of drede 865
 But filthe and nakednesse / and maydenhede
 And heere a-geyn / my clothyng I restore
 And eke my weddyng ryng / for euere more 868
- ¶ The remenaunt of þoure Ioweles / redy be 869
 With-inne þoure chaumbre / I dar it safly seyn
 Naked out of my fadres hous / quod she
 I cam / and naked mot I turne a-geyn [leaf 102] 872

Al þoure plesaunce / wold I folwe feyn
But ȝet I hope / it be nat þoure entent
That I smokles / out of þoure paleys went 875

¶ ȝe coude nat do / so dishonest a thyng 876
That thilke wombe / in which þoure children ley
Shulde byforñ the peepel / in my walkyng
Be seyn al bare / wherfore I þow prey 879
late me nat lyke a worme / go by the wey
Remembre þow / myn owen lord so dere
I was þoure wyf / though I vnworthy were 882

¶ Wherfore in guerdone / of my maydenhede 883
Which that I brought / and nought a-geyn I bere
As vouchesaf / to ȝeue me to my mede
But swich a smok / as I was wont to were 886
That I there-with may wrye / the wombe of hire¹
That was þoure wyf / and here I take my leue <sup>[¹ Corrected
from here.—
W.]</sup>
Of þow myn owen lord / leste I þow greue

¶ The smok quod he / that þou hast on thy bak 890
lat it be stille / and bere it forth with the
But wel vnethes / thilke word he spak
But went his wey / for reuthe and for pite 893
Byforñ the folk / hire seluen stripeth she
And in hire smok / with foot and hede al bare
Toward hire fadres hous / forth² is she fare <sup>[² Above the
line.—W.]</sup>

¶ The folk hire folwen / wepyng in here wey 897
And fortune ay / they cursen / as they gon
But she fro wepyng / kepeth hire eyen drey
Ne in this tyme / word ne spak she noon 900
hire fader / that this tidying / herd a-noon
Cursed the day / and tyme / that nature
Shoþ him to ben / a lyues creature 903



- ¶ For out of doute / this olde poore man 904
 Was euere in suspect / of hire mariage
 For euere he demed / siþe that it bygan
 That whan the lord / fulfilled had his corage 907
 hym wolde thynke / it were a disperage
 To his estate / so lowe for to light
 And voyden hire / as sone as euere he myght 910
- ¶ A-geyns his doughter / hastily goth he 911
 For he by noyse of folk / knew hire comyng
 And with hire olde cote / as it myght be
 he couered hire / ful sorwefully wepyng 914
 But oon hire body / myght he it nat bring
 For rude was the cloþ / and she more of age
 Be dayes feele / than at hire mariage [leaf 102, back] 917
- ¶ Thus with hire fader / for a certeyn space 918
 Dwelleth this flour / of wyfly pacience
 That neither by hire wordes / ne hire face
 Byforn the folk / ne eke in here absence 921
 Ne shewed she / that hire was don offence
 Ne of hire heye estate / no remembraunce
 Ne had she / as by hire countenaunce 924
- ¶ No wonder is / for in hire gret estate 925
 hire goost was euere / in pley n humylite
 No tendre mouth / non hert delicate
 No pompe / no semblaunt of ryalte 928
 But ful of pacient benygnyte
 Discrete / and prydles / ay honorable
 And to hire husbond / ay meke and stable 931
- ¶ Men speken of Iob / and most for his humblesse 932
 As clerkis whan hem list / konne wel endite
 Namely of men / but as in soþfastnesse
 Though Clerkis preyse wommen / but a lite 935

There can no man / in humblesse him a-kyte
 As women konne / ne konne be half so trewe ¶ *Nota bene*
 As wommen ben / but it be falle of newe 938

[PART VI. *No break in the MS.*]

¶ Fro Boloigne / is this Erl of Pauyk come 939
 Of which the fame / vp sprong / to more and lesse
 And in the peeples Eres / alle and some
 Was couth eke / that a newe markysesse 942
 he with him brought / in swich pompe & richesse
 That neuere was there seyn / with mannes eye
 So noble aray / in al West lumbardye 945

¶ The Markys / which that shope / & knew al this 946
 Er that this Erl was come / sent his message
 For thilke sely / poore Grisildis
 And she with humble hert / and glad visage 949
 Nat with no swollen thought / in hire corage
 Cam at his heste / and oon hir knees hire sette
 And reuerently / and wysly she him grette 952

¶ Grisilde *quod* he / my wyl is outerly 953
 This mayden / that shal wedded be to me
 Resceyued be to-morwe / as ryally
 As yt possible is / in myn hous to be 956
 And eke that euery wyght / in his degree
 haue his estate / in syttyng and in seruyse
 And hey plesaunce / as I can best deuyse 959

¶ I haue no womman / sufficient certeyn 960
 The chaumbres to araye / in ordinaunce
 After my lust / and therfore wold I feyn [leaf 103]
 That thyn were / al swich maner gouernaunce 963
 Thow knowest eke / of olde al my plesaunce
 Though thyn a-ray be badde / and euel be-seye
 Do thow thyn deuer / at the leste weye 966

- ¶ Nat oonly lord / that I am glad quod she 967
 To do ȝoure lust / but I desire also
 ȝow for to serue / and please in my degree
 With-outen feynting / and shal euere moo 970
 Ne neuere for no wele / ne no woo
 Ne shal the goost / with-Inne myn hert stynt
 To loue ȝow best / with al myn trewe entent 973
- ¶ And with that word / she gan the hous to dight 974
 And tables for to sette / and beddes make
 And peyned hire / to don al that she myght
 Preying the chaumbreres / for goddis sake 977
 To hasten hem / and faste swepe and shake
 And she the most / seruysable of alle
 hath euery chaumbre arayed / and his halle 980
- ¶ A-bouten the vnderne / gan this Erl a-light 981
 That with him brought / theise noble children twey
 ffor which the peeples / ran to se the sight
 Of here aray / so richely be-sey 984
 And thanne at arst / a-monges hem they sey
 That Walter was no fool / though that him list
 To chaunge his wyf / for it was for his best 987
- ¶ ffor she is feyrere / as they demen alle 988
 Than is Grisilde / and more tendre of age
 And fairere fruyt / bytween hem shuld falle
 And more plesaunt / for hire heigh lynage 991
 hire brother eke / so fayr was of vysage
 That hem to seen / the peeples hath caught plesaunce
 Commendying now / the Markys gouernaunce 994
- ¶ O stormy peeples / vn-sad / and euere vntrewe ¶ Auctor 998
 Ay vndiscret / and chaungyng as a fane
 Delityng euere / in rumbul that is newe
 ffor lyke the Mone / ay waxeth he and wane

- Ay ful of clappyng / dere I-now a Iane
 3oure dome is fals / 3oure constaunce euele preueth
 A ful gret fool is he / that oon 3ow leueth 1001
- ¶ Thus seiden sadde folk / in that Citee 1002
 Whan that the peeple / gased vp and down
 ffor they were glad / right for the nouelte
 To han a newe lady / of here touñ 1005
 No more of this / make I now mencioñ
 But to Grisilde a-geyn / I wol me dresse [leaf 106, back]
 And telle hire constaunce / and hire besynesse 1008
- ¶ fful besy was Grisilde / in euery thyng 1009
 That to the fest / was pertynent
 Right nought was she a-bayst / of hire clothyng
 Though it were rude / and somdele eke to-rent 1012
 But with glad chere / to the 3ate is she went
 With othere folk / to grete the Markysesse
 And after that / doth forth hire besynesse 1015
- ¶ With so glad chere / hise gestes she resceyued 1016
 And so konyngly / euerich in his degree
 That no defaute / no man perceyued
 But ay they wondren / what she be 1019
 That in so poore aray / was for to se
 And coude swich honour / and reuerence
 And worthily they preisen / hire prudence 1022
- ¶ In all this mene while / she ne stynt 1023
 This Mayde / and eke hire brother / to comende
 With al hire herte / in ful benigne entent
 So wel / that noman coude / hire pris amende 1026
 But at the last / whan that theise lordes wende
 To setten hem down to mete / he gan to calle
 Grisilde / as she was besy / in the halle 1029

¶ Grisilde quod he / as it were in his pley 1030
 how lyketh the my wyf / and hire beaute
 Right wel quod she / my lord / for in good fey
 A fairere saw I neuere noon / than she 1033
 I preye to god / 3eue hire prosperite
 And so hope I / that he wyl to 3ow send
 Plesaunce I now / vn to 3oure lyues end 1036

¶ O thyng byseke I 3ow / and warne also ¶ *Vnum bona fide
 precor ac moneo ne
 hanc illis aculeis
 agites quibus alter-
 am agitasti namque
 & iunior & delicaci-
 us nutrita est / pati
 quantum ego ut re-
 or non valeret:—*
 That 3e ne pryke / with no turmentynge
 This tendre Mayde / as 3e han don moo
 ffor she is fostred / in hire norisshynge
 More tenderly / and to my supposynge
 She coude nat / aduersite endure
 As coude a poore / fostred creature 1043

¶ And whan this Walter / saugh hire pacience 1044
 hire glad chere / and no malice at al
 And he so oft / had don to hire offence
 And she ay sad / and constaunt as a wal 1047
 Contenuyng euere / hire Innocence ouer al
 This sturdy Markys / gan his hert dresse
 To rewe vp-on hire wyfly / stedfastnesse 1050

¶ This is I-now / Grisilde myn quod he 1051
 Be now nomore a-gast / ne euele apayd [leaf 104]
 I haue thy feith / and thyn benygnytee
 As wel as euere womman / was assayed 1054
 In gret a-stat / and poorely arrayed
 Now knowe I deere wyf / thy stedfastnesse
 And hire in armes toke / and gan hire kysse 1057

¶ And she for wonder / toke of it no kepe 1058
 She herde nat / what thyng he to hire seyde
 She ferd as she had stirt / out of a slepe
 Tyl she / out of hire Masednesse / a-breyde 1061

- Grisilde *quod* he / by god that for vs deyde
 Thow art my wyf / noon other I haue
 Ne neuere had / as god my soule saue 1064
- ¶ This is thy doughter / which þou hast supposed 1065
 To be my wyf / that other feithfully
 Shal be myn Eyr / as I haue ay disposed
 Thow bar him / in thy body trewely 1068
 At Boloigne / haue I kept hem preuily
 Take hem a-geyn / for now maist þou nat sey
 That thow hast lorñ / noone of þine children twey 1071
- ¶ And folk that other wyse / han seyð on me 1072
 I warne hem wele / that I haue don this dede
 ffor no malice / ne for no cruelte
 But for to assaye / in the / thy wommanhede 1075
 And nat to slen myne children / god forbede
 But for to kepen hem / preuily and stille
 Til I thy purpos knew / and al thy wylle 1078
- ¶ Whan she this herd / on swouzne doun she falleth 1079
 For pytous ioye / and aftir hire swownyng
 She / bothe hire ȝonge children / vn-to hire calleth
 And in hire armes / pytously wepyng 1082
 Embracede hem / and tenderly kyssing
 fful lyke a Moder / with her salte teres
 She bathed bothe here visage / and here heres 1085
- ¶ O which a pytous thyng / it was to se 1086
 hire swownyng / and hire humble voys to heere
 Graunt mercy lord / god thanke it ȝow *quod* she
 That ȝe han saued me / myne children dere 1089
 Now rekke I neuere / to be ded right heere
 Sithe I stonde / in ȝoure loue / and in ȝoure grace
 No force of deth / ne whan my spirit pace 1092

- ¶ O tendre o dere / o 3onge children myne 1093
 3oure wooful Moder / wend stedfastly
 That cruel houndes / or som foule venyme
 had eten 3ow / but god of his mercy 1096
 And 3oure benigne fader / tenderly [leaf 104, back]
 hath don 3ow kepe / and in that same stounde
 Al sodeynly / she fel a-doun to grounde 1099
- ¶ And in hire swough / so sadly holdeth she 1100
 hire children two / whan she gan hem embrace
 That with gret sleight / and gret difficulte
 The children / from hire arm / they gonne race 1103
 O many a teere / many a pytous pace
 Doun ran of hem / that stoden hire beside
 Vnethe a-boute hire / myght they a-byde 1106
- ¶ Walter hire gladeth / and hire sorwe slaketh 1107
 Sche ryseth vp / a-basshed / from hire traunce
 And euery wyght / hire ioye / and feste maketh
 Til she hath caught / a-geyn / hire countenaunce 1110
 Walter hire doth / so feithful plesaunce
 That it was deynte / for to se the chere
 Bytwen hem two / syn they ben met in fere 1113
- ¶ Theise ladyes / whan that they / here tyme sey 1114
 han taken hire / and in-to chaumbre gon
 And stripen hire / out of hire rude aray
 And in a cloth of gold / that bright shon 1117
 With a Corone / of many a riche ston
 Vp-on hire hede / they in-to halle hire brought
 And there she was honoured / as hire ought 1120
- ¶ Thus hath this pytous day / a blisful ende 1121
 ffor euery man & womman doth his myght
 This day / in myrthe and reuel / to spende
 Til on the walkene / shon the sterres light 1124

ffor more solempne / in euery mannes sight
 This feste was / and grettere of costage
 Than was the reuel / of hire mariage 1127

¶ fful many a ȝere / in heigh prosperitee 1128
 lyuen theise two / in concord and in reest
 And richely his doughter / maryed he
 Vn-to a lord / oon of the worthiest 1131
 Of al Itayle / and thanne in pees and rest
 his wyues fader / in his court he kepeth
 Til that the soule / out of his body crepeth 1134

¶ His sone succedith / in his heritage 1135
 In reste and pees / after his faderes day
 And fortunat was eke / in mariage
 Al put he nat his wyf / in gret assay 1138
 This world is nat so strong / it is no nay
 As it hath ben / in olde tymes ȝore
 And herkeneth / what this Auctor / seith therfore 1141

¶ This storie is seid / nat for that wyues shulde [leaf 105]
 folwe Grisilde / as in humilitee
 ffor it were importable / though they wold 1144
 But for that euery wyght / in his degree [Latin note, p. 274.]
 Shulde be constaunt / in aduersitee
 As was Grisilde / therfore Petrak wryteth
 This storie / which with heye stile / he endyteth 1148

¶ ffor sithe a womman / was so pacient 1149
 Vn-to a mortal man / wel more we¹ ought
 Resceyuen al in gree / that god vs sent [¹ Above the line.—W.]
 ffor gret skyl is / he preene that he wrought 1152
 But he ne tempteth no man / that he bought
 As seith Seynt Iame / if ȝe his pistel rede
 he preeueth folk al day / it is no drede 1155

¶ And suffreth vs / as for oure exercise 1156
 With sharpe skorges / and aduersitee
 fful oft to be bete / in sondry wyse
 Nat for to knowe / oure wyl / for certis he 1159
 Er we were born / knew al oure freeletee
 And for oure best / is al his gouernaunce
 lat vs thanne lyne / in vertuous suffraunce 1162

¶ But oo word lordynggis / herkeneth or I go 1163
 It were ful hard / to fynde now a dayes
 In al a Toun / Grisildis thre or twoo
 ffor if þat thay were put / to swich assayes 1166
 The gold of hem / hath now so bad a-layes
 With bras / that though the coyne / be fair at eye
 It wolde rather breste a two / than plye 1169

¶ ffor which here / for the wyues loue of Bathe 1170
 Whos lyf / and al hire secte / God mayntene
 In heigh maistrie / and elles were it skathe
 I wol with lusty hert / fressh and grene 1173
 Seyn 3ow a song / to glade 3ow I wene
 And late vs stynt / of earnestful matere
 Herkeneth my song / that seith in this manere 1176

G Risilde is ded / and eke hire pacience
 And bothe at ones / I-beried in Itaylle
 ffor which I crie / in open audience 1179
 No wedded man / so hardy be / to assaylle
 his wyues pacience / in trost to fynde
 Grisildis / for in certeyn he shal fayle 1182

¶ O noble wyues / ful of heigh prudence . ¶ Auctor
 lat noon humilite / 3oure tonges nayle
 Ne late no Clerk / haue cause or diligence 1185
 To wryte of 3ow / a storie of swich meruaille [leaf 105, back]
 As of Grisilde / pacient and kynde
 lest Chechiuache / 3ow swelwe / in hire entraille 1188

¶ ffolweth Ekko / that holdeth noon silence
 But euere answereth / at the counter taille
 Beth nat be-daffed / for 3oure Innocence 1191
 But sharply taketh on 3ow / the gouernaille
 Emprmenteth wel / this lesson / in 3oure mynde
 fför comune profyt / sithe it may a-vaille 1194

¶ 3e Archewyues / stondeth ay at defence
 Syn 3e ben stronge / as is a gret Camaille
 Ne suffreth nat / that men 3ow do offence 1197
 And sklendre wyues / feble as in bataille
 Beth egre / as a Tygre is be-3onde in Inde
 Ay clappeth as a Mille / I 3ow counsaille 1200

¶ Ne drede hem nat / doth hem no reuerence
 For though thyn husbonde / armed be in maille
 The arwes of thyn crabbed / eloquence 1203
 Shal perse his brest / and eke his auentaille
 In ielousye / I rede eke thow him bynde
 And þou shalt make him couche / as doth a quaille 1206

¶ If thow be fair / there folk ben in presence
 Shewe thow thy vysage / and thyn apparaille
 If thow be foule / be free of thyn dispence 1209
 To gete the frendes / ay do thyn trauaille
 Be ay of chere as light / as lef on lynde
 And late him care / wepe / wrynge / and waille 1212

T

¶ This worthy Clerk / whan ended was his tale 1213
 Oure host seyde / and swor by goddes bones
 Me were leuere / than a Barel of ale
 My wyf at hom / had herd this legend ones 1216
 This is a gentil tale / for the nones
 As to my purpos / wyst ȝe my wyll
 But thyng that wol nat be / lat it be stille 1219
 ¶ Sic desinit fabula Clerici /

p. 244, l. 281. ¶ Vt expeditis curis aliis ad videndum domini sui sponsam cum puellis comitibus prepararet:

p. 244, l. 295. ¶ Quam Walterus cogitabundus incedens eamque compellans nomine:

p. 246, l. 344. ¶ Et patri tuo placet inquit & mihi vt vxor mea sis / & credo idipsum tibi placeat set habeo ex te querere & c':

p. 246, l. 354. ¶ Sine villa frontis aut verbi impugnatione:

p. 246, l. 359. ¶ Nil ego vnquam sciens ne dum faciam set eciam cogitabo quod contra animum tuum sit / nec tu aliquid facies & si me mori iusseris quod moleste feram:

p. 247, l. 372. ¶ De hinc ne quid reliquiarum fortune veteris nouam inferat / in domum nudari eam iussit:

p. 248, l. 400. ¶ Atque apud omnes supra fidem cara est / vix quod hijs ipsis qui illius originem nouerant persuaderi posset Ianicule natam esse tantus vite tantus morum decor ea verborum grauitas atque dulcedo quibus omnium animos nexu sibi magni amoris astrinxerat:—

p. 248, l. 421. ¶ Sic Walterus humili quidem set insigni ac prospero matrimonio honestatis summa dei in pace & c':—

p. 248, l. 425. ¶ Quodque eximiam virtutem tanta sub inopia latitantem tam perspicaciter deprendisset vulgus prudentissimus habebatur:

p. 248, l. 428. ¶ Neque vero solers sponsa muliebria tantum ac domestica set vbi res posceret publica eciam subibat officia:—

p. 249, l. 436. ¶ viro absente lites patrie nobilium discordias dirimens atque componens tam grauibz responsis tantaque matritate & iudicii equitate vt omnes ad salutem publicam demissam celo feminam predicarent:—

p. 249, l. 449. ¶ Ceperit ut fit interdum Walterum cum iam ab lactata esset infantula mirabilis quedam quam laudabilis cupiditas satis expertam¹ care fidem coniugis experiendi alcius & iterum atque iterum retemptandi:—

p. 271, l. 1145. ¶ Hanc Historiam stilo nunc alto retexere visum fuit non tum ideo vt matronas nostri temporis ad imitandam huius vxoris pacienciam que mihi inimitabilis videtur quam vt legentes ad imitandam saltem femine constanciam excitarentur vt quod hec viro suo prestitit / hoc prestare deo nostro audeat quilibet vt Iacobus ait Apostolus / Intemptator sit malorum & ipse neminem temptat / probat tamen & sepe nos multis ac grauibz flagellis exerceri sinit non vt animum nostrum sciat quem sciuit antequam crearemur & c':

¹ *apertam* corrected to *expertam*.—W.

[on leaf 105, back] .& incipit prologus of the Marchaunt

Wepying and waylyng / care and other sorwe [leaf 106]
 I knowe I-now / on Euen and on morwe
 Quod the Marchaunt / and so don othere moo
 That wedded ben / I trowe that it be so 1216
 fful wel I wot / it fareth so by me
 I haue a wyf / the werste that may be
 For though the fend / to hire I-coupled were
 She wolde him ouer-macche / I dar wel swere 1220
 what shulde I 3ow reherce / in special
 hire heye malice / she is a shrewe with-al
 There is a long / and a large difference
 Be-twix Grisildis / grete pacience 1224
 And of my wyf / the passyng cruelte
 were I vnbounden / also mot I the
 I wolde neuere eft / comen in the snare
 we wedded men / lyue in sorwe and care 1228
 Assay who-so wyl / and he shal fynde
 That I seye soth / be seynt Thomas of Inde
 As for the more part / I seye nat alle
 God shilde that it shulde / so byfalle 1232
 A goode sire hoost / I haue I-wedded be
 Theise Monthes two / and more nat parde
 And 3et I trowe / that he that al his lyue
 wyflee hath ben / though that men wold him ryue 1236
 vn-to the hert / ne coude in no manere
 Tellen so meche sorwe / as I now here
 Coude tellen / of my wyues cursidnes
 Now quod oure host / Marchaunt so god 3ow blis 1240
 Syn 3e so mechil knowen / of that art
 fful hertily I pray 3ow / telle vs part
 Gladly quod he / but of myn owen sore
 ffor sory hert / I telle may no more 1244

† Incipit fabula Mercatoris

Whilom there was dwellyng / in Lumbardie
 A worthy knyght / that born was of Pauye
 In which he leued / in gret prosperite
 And Sixty ȝere / a wyfles man was he 1248
 And folwed ay / his bodily delyt
 On wommen / there as was his appetit
 As don theise fooles / that ben seculere
 And whan that he was passed / sixty ȝere 1252
 Were it for holynesse / or for dotage [leaf 106, back]
 I can nat sey / but swich a gret corage
 had this knyght / to ben a wedded man
 That day and nyght / he doth al that he can 1256
 To spye / where he myght / wedded be
 Preying oure lord / to graunte him that he
 Myght ones knowe / of thilk blisful lyf
 That is bytwix / an husbonde and his wyf 1260
 And for to lyue / vnder that holy bond
 with which / that first / god / man and womman bond
 Noon other lyf seide he / is worth a bene
 ffor wedlak is so esy / and so clene 1264
 That in this world / it is a Paradyse
 Thus seyde this olde knyght / that was so wyse
 And certeynly as soth / as god is kyng
 To take a wyf / it is a glorious thyng 1268
 And namely whan a man / is old and hore
 Than is a wyf / the fruyt of his tresore
 Than shuld he take / a ȝong wyf and a feyre
 Of which he myght / engender him an Eyre 1272

And lede his lyf / in Ioye and solace
 where alle theise bacheleres / syngen allas
 whan that they fynd / any aduersitee
 In loue / which is but childissh vanyte 1276
 And trewely it syt wel / to be so
 That bacheleres / han oft tyme peyne and woo
 On brotel ground / they bilde / and brothilnesse
 They fynde / whan they wene sekernesse 1280
 They lyue but as a bird / or as a beest
 In liberte / and vnder noon a-reest
 There as a wedded man / in his estate
 lyueth a lyf blisseful / and ordinate 1284
 vnder this 3ok / of mariage I-bounde
 wel may his hert / in Ioye and blisse habounde
 ffor who can be / so buxum as a wyf ¶ Nota bene
 who is so trewe / and eke so ententyf 1288
 To kepe him syke and hole / as is his make
 ffor wel or woo / she wyl him nat forsake
 She nys nat wery / him to loue and serue
 Though that he lye / bedrede / til he sterue 1292
 And 3et somme Clerkes seyn / it is nat so
 Of which / Theofaste / is on of thoo
 what force / though Theofaste list lye
 Ne take þou no wyf quod he / for husbondrye 1296
 As for to spare / in houshold thyn dispence
 A trewe seruauunt / doth more diligence
 Thy good to kepe / than thyn owen wyf
 ffor she wyl cleyme half part / al hire lyf [leaf 107] 1300
 And if þou be syke / so god me saue
 Thyne verray frendes / or a trewe knaue
 wyln kepe the bet / than she that wayteth ay
 After thy good / and hath don many a day 1304
 And if thou take a wyf / of heye lynage
 She shal be hauteyn / and of gret costage
 Theise sentences / and an hondred thynges worse
 wryteth this man / there god his soule curse 1308

But take no kepe / of aȝ swiȝh vanyte
 Diffye Theofaste / and herkene to me
 A wyf is goddis gifte / verrayly [*Latin note*, p. 310.]
 Alle othere manere giftes / hardily 1312
 As / londes / Rentes / Pasture or Comune
 Or mebles / alle ben giftes of fortune
 That passen / as a shadewe on a wal
 But drede nat / if pleylnly speke I shal 1316
 A wyf wol last / and in thyn hous endure ¶ verum
 wel lengere / than the list perauenture
 Mariage is / a ful gret sacrament
 he that hath no wyf / I holde him shent 1320
 he lyueth helpeles / and al dissolate
 I speke of folk / in seculer estate
 And herkene why / I seye nat this for nought
 That womman is / for mannes help I-wrought 1324
 The heye gōd / whan he had Adam maked
 And saw him a-lone / bely naked
 God of his gret goodnes / seide than [*Latin note*, p. 310.]
 Lat vs now make / an helpe vn-to this man 1328
 lyke to him self / and thanne he mad him Eue
 here may ȝe se / and heere-by may ȝe preeue
 That wyf is mannes help / and his comfort
 his paradise terrestre / and his disport 1332
 So buxum / and so vertuous is she
 They must nedes / lyue in vnite
 O flessȝ they ben / and oo flessȝ as I gesse
 hath but on hert / in wele and in distresse 1336
 A wyf / a Seynt Mary benedicite
 how myȝht a man / han ony aduersite
 That hath a wyf / certes I can nat sey
 The blisse ther is / be-twix hem tway 1340
 There may no tonge telle / or herte thynke
 if he be poore / she helpeth him to swynke ¶ or to drynke
 She kepeth his good / and wasteth neuere a dele
 Al that hire husbonde lust / hire liketh wele 1344

She seith nat ones nay / whan she seith ȝe [leaf 107, back]
 Do this seith he / al redy sire seith she
 O blisseful ordre of wedlak / preciouſe
 Thow that art so mery / and eke so vertuouse 1348
 And so comended / and approued eke
 That ony man / þat holdith him worth a leke
 vp-oon his bare knees / ought al his lyf
 Thanke his god / that him hath sent a wyf 1352
 Or ellis preye to god / hym for to sende
 A wyf / to laste / vn-to his lyues ende
 ffor than his lyf / is sette in sekernes
 he may nat be / disseyued as I gesse 1356
 So that he werke / after his wyues rede
 Than may he boldely / bere vp his hede
 They ben so trewe / and ther-with-al so wyse
 ffor which / if þou wylt werke / as the wyse 1360
 Do alwey / so as wommen wol the rede
 Lo how þat Iacob / as theise Clerkes rede [Latin note, p. 310.]
 By good counseil / of his Moder rebekke
 Bond the kydes skyn / a-boute his nekke 1364
 ffor which / his fadres benysoñ he wan
 Lo Iudyth / as the story eke telle can [Latin note, p. 310.]
 Be wys counseil / she goddis peeple kepte
 And slough him / Olofernus / while he slepte 1368
 lo Abygañ / by good counseil / how she [Latin note, p. 310.]
 Saued hire husbonde / Nabal / whan that he
 Shulde haue be slayn / and loke Ester also [Latin note, p. 310.]
 By good counseil / delyuered out of woo 1372
 The peeple of god / and mad him Mardochee
 Of Assuer / enhaunced for to be
 There nys no thyng / in gree superlatyf
 As seith Senek / a-boue an humble wyf [Latin note, p. 310.] 1376
 Suffre thy wyues tonge / as Cäton byt
 She shal comaunde / and þou shalt suffren it [Latin note, p. 310.]
 And ȝet she wyl obeye / of curteisye
 A wyf is kepere / of thyn husbondrye 1380

wel may the syke man / bywaylle and wepe
 There as nys no wyf / the hous to kepe
 I warne the / if wysely þou wolt werche [Latin note, p. 310.]
 loue wel thy wyf / as crist loued his chirche 1384
 If þou loue thy self / thow louest thy wyf [Latin note, p. 310.]
 Noman hateth his flessch / but in his lyf
 he fostreth it / and therfore bidde I the [Latin note, p. 310.]
 Chere thy wyf / or thow shalt neuere thee 1388
 husbonde or wyf / what so men iape or pleye
 Of worldly folk / holden the sekyr weye
 They ben so knyht / there may noon harm betide [leaf 108]
 And namely vp-on the wyues syde 1392
 ¶ This olde knyght Ianuare / of which I tolde
 Considered hath / with-Inne his dayes olde
 The lusty lyf / the vertuose quiete
 That is in mariage / hony swete 1396
 And for hise frendes / oon a day he sent
 To tellen hem / the effect / of his entent
 with face sad / this tale he hath hem told
 he seide frendes / I am hore and old 1400
 And almost god wot / oon pittis brynke
 vpon my soule / somewhat must I thynke
 I haue my body / fouly dispended
 Blissed be god / that it shal be amended 1404
 And that a-noon / in al the hast that I can
 ffor I wol be certeyn / a wedded man
 vn-to sum maide / fair and tendre of age
 I preye ȝow shapeth / for my mariage 1408
 Al sodeynly / for I wol nat a-bide
 And I wyl fond / to spien of my syde
 To whom I may be wedded / hastily
 But for-as-mече / as ȝe ben moo than I 1412
 ȝe shuln rather / swich a thyng a-spien
 Than I / and where / me best were to allien
 But oo thyng warne I ȝow / my frendes deere
 I wol noon old wyf haue / in no manere 1416

She shal not passe / sextene ȝer certeyn
 Olde fyssh and ȝonge flessch / wolde I haue fayn
 Bet quod he is a Pyke / than a Pykereth
 And bet than olde Beef / is the tendre veth 1420
 I wol no womman / thretty ȝer of age
 It is but benstraw / and gret forage
 And eke theise olde wydewes / god it wot
 They knowe so meche craft / on wades bot 1424
 So meche broken harm / whan hem liste
 That with hem / shuld I neuere lyue in reste
 ffor sondry scoles / maken subtil clerkes
 A womman of many scoles / half a clerk is 1428
 But certeynly / a ȝonge thyng / moun men gye
 Right as men moun warme wex / with hondis plye.
 Wherefore I seye ȝow / pleyonly in a clause
 I wol noon olde wyf haue / right for this cause 1432
 ffor if so were / I had swich myschaunce
 That I in hire / coude haue no plesaunce
 Than shuld I lede my lyf / in avoutree
 And streight go to the deuel / whan I deye [leaf 106, back]
 Ne children shulde I noone / vp-oon hire geten 1437
 ȝet were me leuere / houndes had me eten
 Than that myn heritage / shulde falle
 In straunge hand / and this I telle ȝow alle 1440
 I doute nought / I wot the cause why
 Men shulde wedde / and forthermore wot I
 There speketh many man / of mariage
 That wot no more of it / than wot my page 1444
 ffor which causes / man shulde take a wyf
 If he ne may nat / lyue chast his lyf
 Take him a wyf / with gret deuocion
 By cause of leueful / procreacion 1448
 Of children / to honour of god a-boue
 And nat oonly / for paramour or loue
 And for they shuld / lecherie eschue
 And ȝelde here dettes / whan that it is due 1452

Or for that eche of hem / shulde helpen other
 In myschief / as a suster shal the brother
 And lyue in chastite / ful holily
 But sires be ȝoure leue / that am nat I 1456
 ffor god be thanked / I dar mak a-vaunt
 I fele myne lymes stark / and sufficeaunt
 To do al that a man / bylongeth to
 I wot my self best / what I may do 1460
 Though I be hore / I fare as doth a tree
 That blomȝth / er þat fruyt I-wexen be
 A bloȝmy tree / nys neither drye ne dede
 I fele me nowher hore / but oon myn hede 1464
 My herte and alle myne lymes / ben as grene
 As laurell thurgh the ȝere / is for to sene
 And syn that ȝe / han herd al myn entent
 I preye ȝow to my wyl / ȝe wyln assent 1468
 Dyuerse men / diuersly him told
 Of mariage / manye ensamples old
 Some blamed it / some preised it certeyn
 But at the laste / shortly for to seyn 1472
 As al day falleth / altercaciō
 Betwixe frendes / in disputaciō
 There fel a strif / be-twix hise bretheren two
 Of which / þat on / was cleped / Placebo 1476
 Iustinus sothly / called was that other
 Placebo seide / o Ianuare brother
 fful litel nede / had ȝe my lord so deere
 Counsel to aske / of ony that is heere 1480
 But that ȝe ben / so ful of sapience [leaf 100]
 That ȝow ne lyketh / for ȝoure heygh prudence
 To wyue fro the word / of Salamon
 This word seide he / vn-to vs euerychoñ 1484
 Werk al thyng be counsel / thus seide he
 And thanne shalt þou nat / repente the
 But though that Salamon / spak swich a word
 Myn owen dere brother / and my lord 1488

So wysly god my soule / brynge at rest
 I holde ȝoure owen counseil / is the best
 ffor brother myn / of me take this motyf
 I haue now ben / a courte man al my lyf 1492
 And god it wot / though I vnworthy be
 I haue stonden / in ful gret degree
 Aboue lordes / of ful heigh astate
 ȝet had I neuere / with noon of hem debate 1496
 I neuere hem contraried / trewely
 I wot wel that my lord / can more than I
 What that he seith / I holde it ferme and stable
 I seye the same / or ellis thyng semblable 1500
 A ful gret fool / is ony counseillour
 That serueth any lord / of heigh honour
 That dar presume / or ellys thynken it
 That his counseil / shulde passe his lordes wyt 1504
 Nay / lordes be none fooles be my fay
 ȝe han ȝoure self / seid heere to-day
 So heigh sentence / so holily and so wele
 That I consente / and conferme euerydele 1508
 ȝoure wordes alle / and ȝoure opynyōn
 By god there nys man / in al this touñ
 Ne in ytaille / coude bet haue I-seyd
 Crist halt hym / of this counseille ful wel paid 1512
 And trewely it is / an heigh corage
 Of ony man / that stopen is in age
 To take a ȝong wyf / be my fader kyn
 ȝoure hert hangeth / oon a Ioly pyn 1516
 Doth now in this matere / right as ȝow lyst
 ffor ffynally / I holde it for the best
 ¶ Iustinus that ay stille sat / and herde
 Right in this wyse / he to Placebo answerde 1520
 Now brother myn / be pacient I pray
 Syn ȝe han seid / and herkene what I sey
 Senek / amongis hise othere wordes wyse
 Seith / that a man / ought him right wel avyse 1524

To whom hem zeueth his lond or his Catal
 And syn I ought / a-vyse me right wel [leaf 100, back]
 To whom I zoue / my good a-wey fro me
 Wel meche more I ought / avysen me parde 1528
 To whom I zeue my body / for alwey
 I warne 3ow wele / it is no childes pley
 To take a wyf / with-outen avysement
 Men must enquire / this is myn assent 1532
 Wheiþer she be wys / and sobre / or dronkelewe
 Or proud / or ellis / other weyes a shrewe
 A chidere / or a wastour of thy good
 Or riche or poore / or ellis mannyssh wood 1536
 Al be it so / that no man fynden shal
 Noon in this world / that trotteth hool in al
 Ne man ne best / swich as men coude deuyse
 But natheles / it ought I-now suffice 1540
 With any wyf / if so were that she had
 Moo goode thewes / than hire vices bad
 And al this askith leyser / for to enquire
 ffor god it woot / I haue wept many a tere 1544
 fful preuily / syn that I hadde a wyf
 Preyse who so wyl / a wedded mannys lyf
 Certeyn I fynde in it / but cost and care
 And obseruaunces / of alle blisses bare 1548
 And 3et god wot / myne neyghebores aboute
 And namely of wommen / many a route
 Seyn / that I haue / the most stedefast wyf
 And eke the mekest / on that berith lyf 1552
 But I wot best / where wryngeth me my sho
 3e moun for me / right as 3ow liketh do
 Auyseth 3ow / 3e ben a man of age
 how that 3e entren / in-to mariage 1556
 And namely / with a 3ong wyf and a fair
 Be him that made / water / Erthe / and Eyr
 The 3ongest man that is / in al this route
 Is besy I-now to bryngen it a-boute 1560

To han his wyf a-lone / trosteth me
 3e shuln nat ples hire / fully 3eres thre
 That is to seyn / to don hire ful plesaunce
 A wyf asketh / ful many an obseruaunce 1564
 I pray 3ow / that 3e be nat / euele a-paid
 ¶ Wel quod this Ianuarie / and hast þou seid
 Straw for thy Senek and for thyne proverbes
 I counte it nat a panyere ful of herbes 1568
 Of scole termes wysere men than thow
 As þou hast herd / assentyd right now
 To my purpos / Placebo what seye 3e . [leaf 110]
 I seye it is a cursed man / quod he 1572
 That lettith matrimoyne / sekerly
 And with that word / they resyn sodeynly
 And ben assentid fully / that he shulde
 Be wedded / whan him list / and where he wolde 1576
 heigh fantasie / and curious besynesse
 ffro day to day / gan in the soule impresse
 Of Ianuarie / a-boute his mariage
 Many fair shap / and many a fair visage 1580
 There passeth thurgh his hert / nyght be nyght
 As who toke a Myroure / polysshed bryght
 And sette it / in a comune / Market place
 Than shuld he se / ful many a fygure pace 1584
 By his Mirour / and in this same wyse
 Gan Ianuarie / with-Inne his þouȝt deuyse
 Of maydenes / which that dwelt him beside
 he wyst nought where / that he myght a-byde 1588
 ffor if that on / haue beaute in hire face
 Another stondeth so / in the peeples grace
 ffor hire sadnes / and hire benignitee
 That of the people / the grettest voys hath she 1592
 And somme were riche / and had a bad name
 But natheles / betwixt earnest and game
 he at the last / a-poynteth him oon one
 And lete alle othere / from his hert gone 1596

And chesith hire / of his owen auctorite
 ffor loue is blynde / al day / and may nat se
 And whan that he was / in his bed brought
 he portrayed in his hert / and in his thought 1600
 hire ffressh beaute / and hire age tendre ¶ *Nota*
 hire mydel smal / and hire armes sklendre
 hire wys gouernaunce / hire gentillesse
 hire womanly beryng / and hire sadnesse 1604
 And whan that he / on hire was condescended
 hym thought his choys / myght nat ben amended
 ffor whan þat he him self / concluded had
 him thought / eche other manys wyt so bad 1608
 That impossible it were / to replie
 Ageyn his choise / this was his fantasie
 hise frendes sent he to / at his instaunce
 And preyed hem / to do him that plesaunce 1612
 That hastily they woldyn / to him come
 he wold a-quyt here labour / al and some
 Nedith it no more / for him to go ne ride [leaf 110, back]
 he was a-poynted / there he wold a-byde 1616
 Placebð cam / and eke hise frendes sone
 And alderfirst / he bad hem alle a boone
 That noone of hem / noone argumentez make
 Ageyn the purpos / which þat he hath take 1620
 Which purpos / was plesyng to god / seide he
 And verray ground / of his prosperite
 he seide there was / a mayden in the toun
 Which that of beaute / had gret renoun 1624
 Al were it so / she were of smal degree
 Suffiseth hym / hire zouthes and hire beaute
 Which maide he seide / he wolde han to his wyf
 To leade in ease and holynesse / his lyf 1628
 And thanke god / that he myght haue hire al
 That no wyght / his blisse parten shal
 he preyed hem / to laboure in this nede
 And shape that he / faille nat to spede 1632

ffor than he seide / his spirit was at ease
 Than is *quod* he / no thyng may me displese
 Saue o thyng / prykketh in my conscience
 The which I wol reherce / in ȝoure presence 1636
 I haue *quod* he herd seid / ful ȝore a-go
 There may no man haue / *parfyt* blisses two
 This is to seyn / in erthe and eke in heuene
 ffor though he kepe *him* / fro the sinnes seuene 1640
 And eke from euery braunche / of thilke tree
 ȝet is there / so *parfyt* felicite
 And so gret ese / and lust in mariage
 That euere I am agast / now in myn age 1644
 That I shal lede now / so mery a lyf
 So delicat / with-uten woo and strif
 That I shal haue / myn heuene in erthe heere
 ffor sithe that verray heuene / is bought so dare 1648
 With tribulaciōis / and gret penaunce
 how shuld I than / that lyue in swich plesaunce
 As alle wedded men / don with here wyues
 Come to the blisse / there crist eterne / oon lyue ys 1652
 This is my drede / and ȝe myne bretheryn twey
 Assoyleth me / this questioñ / I prey
 Iustinus / which that hated his foly
 Answered a-noon / right in his iapery 1656
 And for he wold / his longe tale a-bregge
 he wold noon auctorite / allege
 But seide sire / so there be noon obstacle
 Othere than this / god of his heye myracle [leaf 111] 1660
 And of his mercy / may so for ȝow werche
 That er ȝe han / ȝoure rightis of holi chirche
 ȝe may repent / of wedded mannys lyf
 In which ȝe seyn / there nys no woo ne strif 1664
 And elles god forbede / but he sent
 A wedded man / hym grace to repent
 Wel oft rather / than a sengle man
 And perfore sire / the best red that I can 1668

Despeire 3ow nought / but haue in 3oure memorie
 Parauenture she may / be 3oure purgatorie
 She may be goddis meene / and goddis whiþ
 Than shal 3oure soule / vp to heuene skiþ 1672
 Swiftere than an arwe / doth out of a bowe
 I hope to god / here-after shulñ 3e knowe
 That there nys noon / so gret felicitye
 In mariage / ne neuere more shal be 1676
 That 3ow shal lette / of 3oure sauacion
 So that 3e vse / as skyl is and reson
 The lustes of 3oure wyf / attemprely
 Take hem nat ofte / but mesurably 1680
 And that 3e kepyn 3ow / eke / from other synne
 My tale is doñ / for my wyt is thynne
 Beth nat a-gast / here-of / my brother dere
 But late vs waden / out of this matere 1684
 The wyf of Bathe / if 3e han vnderstonde
 Of mariage / which we han oon honde
 Declared / hath / ful wel in litel space
 ffareth now wel / god haue 3ow in his grace 1688
 ¶ And with that word / this Iustinus & his brother
 han tan here leue / and ech of hem of other
 ffor whan they saugh / that it must nedes be
 They wroughten so / by sleyte and wys trettee 1692
 That she this Mayde / which that Mayus hight
 As hastily / as euere that she myght
 Shal wedded be / vn-to this Ianuarie
 I trowe it were / to longe 3ow to tarie 1696
 If I 3ow told / of euery script and bond
 By which that she / was feffed in his lond
 Or for to rekken / of hire riche a-ray
 But finally / I-comen is that day 1700
 That to the chirche / bothe be they went
 ffor to resceyue / the holy sacrament
 fforth cometh the prest / with stole a-boute his nekke
 And bad hire be lyke / Sarra and Rebekke 1704

In wysdom / and in trouthe of mariage
 And seide hise orisouns / as is vsage
 And crouched hem / and bad god shuld hem blis
 And mad al seker I-now / with holynes [leaf 111, back] 1708-

THus ben they wedded / with solempnyte
 And at the fest sitteth / he and she
 With othere worthy folk / vp-on the deys
 Al ful of ioye and blisse / is the paleys 1712
 And ful of Instrumentez / and of vetaille
 The most deynteuous / of al ytaille
 Byforñ hem were there / Instrumentes of swich soun
 That Orpheus / nor Thebes Amphioun 1716
 Ne maden neuere / swich a melody
 At euery cours / than cam loud Mynstralsy
 That neuere tromped / Ioab / for to here
 Ne he Theodomas / half so clere 1720
 At Thebes / whan the Citee was in doute
 Bacus / the wyn / hem shynketh al a-boute
 And venus laugheth / vp-on euery wyght
 ffor Ianuarie / was bycome hire knyght 1724
 And wolde both assayen / his corage
 In liberte / and eke in mariage
 And with hire fyrbrond / in hire hand aboute
 Daunceth byforñ the Bryde / and al the route 1728
 And certeynly / I dar wel seyn this
 That Ymeneus / which god of weddyng is
 Saw neuere his lyf / so merye a wedded man
 holde þou thy pees / thow Poete Marcian 1732
 That wrytest vs / that ilke weddyng mery
 Of hire philosophie / and hym Marcury
 And of the songes / that the Muses song
 To smal is bothe thy penne / and eke thy tong 1736
 ffor to discryuen / of this mariage
 whan tendre þouthe / hath wedded stoupyng age
 There is swich myrthe / that it may nat be wretyn
 Assayeth it þoure self / than may 3e wetyn 1740

If that I lye / or noon / in thys matere
 Mayus that syt / with so benigne a chere
 hire to byholde / it semed feyrie
 Quene Ester / loked neuere with swich an eye 1744
 On Assure / so meke a loke hath she
 I may 3ow nat deuyse / al hire beaute
 But thus muche / of hire beaute / tellen I may
 That she was lyke / the bright morwe of May 1748
 ffulfilled of al beaute / and plesaunce
 This Ianuarie / is rauysshed / in a traunce
 At euery tyme / he loked oon hire face
 But in his hert / to gan hire to manace 1752
 That he that nyght / in armes wolde hire streyne
 Hardere / than euere Parys / dide Elyne [leaf 112]
 But nathelees / 3et had he gret pitee ¶ Nota bene
 That thilke nyght / offende hire must he 1756
 And thought allas / o tendre creature
 Now wolde god / 3e myght wel endure
 Al my corage / it is so sharþ and kene
 I am a-gaast / 3e shuln it nat sustene 1760
 But god forbede / that I dide al my myght
 Now wolde god / that it were wexin nyght
 And that the nyght / wolde lasten euere moo
 I wolde / that al this peeple / were a-go 1764
 And finally / he doth al his labour
 As he best myght / sauynge his honour
 To hast hem fro the mete / in subtil wyse
 The tyme cam / that reson was to ryse 1768
 And after that / men daunce / and drynke fast
 And spices / al a-boute the hous / they cast
 And ful of ioye and blisse / is euery man
 Al but a Squyere / hyght Damyan 1772
 which carf byforñ the knyght / ful many a day
 he was so rauysshed / oon his lady / May
 That for the verray peyne / ha was ny wood
 Al-most he swelt / and swoughned as he stood 1776

So sore hath venus hurt him / with hire bronde
 As that she bar it / daunsyng in hire honde
 And to his bed / he went him hastily
 No more of him / at this tyme speke I 1780
 But there / I lete him wepe I-now / and pleyne
 Til fresshe May / wol rewen oon his payne
 O perilous fire / that in the bedstrawe bredeth ¶ Auctor
 O famulere foo / that his seruyce bedeth 1784
 O seruauant traytour / fals homly hewe
 lyke to the Naddere / in bosom sly vntrewe
 God shilde vs alle / from youre acqweyntaunce
 O Ianuarie / dronken in plesaunce 1788
 In mariage / se how thy Damyan
 Thyn owen squyer / and thy born man
 Entendeth / for to do the velanye
 God graunt the / thyn homely foo / to spye 1792
 ffor in this world / nys werse pestilence
 Than homely foo / al day in thy presence
 Parfourmed hath the Sonne / his Ark diurne
 No lengere may / the body of him sojourne 1796
 On the orisoñ / as in that latitude
 Night with his mantel / that is derk and rude
 Gan ouer-sprede / the Emysperye a-boute
 ffor which / departed is / this lusty route 1800
 ffor Ianuarie / with thank oon euery syde
 Hom to here hous / lustily they ryde [leaf 112, back]
 where as they don / here thynges as hem list
 And whan they saw here tyme / go to rest 1804
 ¶ Sone after that / this hasty Ianuarie
 wold go to bedde / he wold no lengere tarie
 he drynketh / Ypocras / Clarre and Vernage
 Of spices hote / to encreasen his corage 1808
 And many a letuarie / had he ful fyne
 Swich as the cursed Monk / Daun Constantyne
 hath wryten in his bok / de Coitu
 To ete hem alle / he was no thyng eschue 1812

And to hise pryue frendes / thus seide he
 ffor goddis loue / as sone as it may be
 lat voyden al this hous / in curteys wyse
 And they han don / right as he wol deuyse 1816
 Men drynken / and the trauers drawn a-noon
 The bryde was brought / abedde / as stille as a ston
 And whan the bed / was with the prest I-blissed
 Out of the chaumbre / hath euery wyght him dressed
 And Ianuarie / hath fast in armes take
 his fressh May / his paradyse his make
 he lulleth hire / he kisseth hire ful ofte
 with thikke bristelis / of his berd / vn-softe 1824
 lyke to the skyn / of houndes fissh / sharp as a brere
 ffor he was shaue / al newe / in his manere
 he rubbeth hire / a-boute hire tendre face
 And seide thus / alas / I mot trespass 1828
 To ȝow my spouse / and ȝow gretly offende
 Er tyme come / that I wol doun descende
 But natheles / considereth this quod he
 There nys no werkeman / what so euere he be 1832
 That may bothe werke wel / and hastily
 This wyl be don at leyser / parfytly
 It is no force / how longe that we pleye
 In trewe wedlake / coupled be we tweye 1836
 And blissed be the ȝok / that we ben Inne
 ffor in actes / we moun do no synne
 A man may do no synne / with his wyf
 Ne hurte himself / with his owen knyf 1840
 ffor we han leue / to pleye / as by the lawe
 Thus labureth he / til that the day gan dawe
 And thanne he taketh a soppe / in fyn Clarre
 And vp-right in his bed / than sitteth he 1844
 And after that / he song ful loude and clere
 And kissed his wyf / and mad wantoun chere
 he was al coltyssh / ful of ragerye
 And ful of Iergon / as a flekked pye 1848

The slak skyn / a-boute his nekke shaketh
 While that he song / so chaunteth he and craketh [leaf 118]
 And god wot / what that May / thought in hire hert
 Whan she him saw / vpsittyng in his shert 1852
 In his nyght-cappe / and with his nekke lene
 She preyseth nat / his pleiyng worth a bene
 Than seide he thus / my reste wol I take
 Now day is come / I may no lengere wake 1856
 And doun he leid his hede / and slepe til prime
 And afterward / whan that he saw his tyme
 vp riseth Ianuarie / but fresshe May
 held hire chaumbre / vn-to the ferthe day 1860
 As vsage is / of wyues / for the beste
 ffor euery labour sumtyme / mote haue reste
 Or ellis longe may he / nat endure
 This is to seyn / no lyues creature 1864
 Be it of fyssh or bryd / or beest or man
 Now wol I speke / of wooful Damyan
 That langwyssheth for loue / as 3e shuln heere
 Therefore I speke to him / in this manere 1868
 I seide / o seely Damyan / allas ¶ Auctor
 Answere to myn demaunde / as in this cas
 how shalt þou / to thy lady fressh may
 Telle thy woo / she wyl alwey sey nay 1872
 Eke if þou speke / she wyl thy woo be-wrey
 God be thyn helpe / I can no betyr sey
 This syke Damyan / in venus fyre
 So brenneth / that he deyeth for desyre 1876
 ffor which he put his lyf / in auenture
 No lengere myght he / in this wyse endure
 But preuyly a pennere / gan he borwe
 And in a lettre wrot he / al his sorwe 1880
 In manere of a compleynt / or a lay
 Vn-to this fair / fressh May
 And in a purs of sylk / heng oon his sherte
 he hath it put / and leide it at his herte 1884

The Mone that at noon / was that ilke day
 That Ianuarie hath wedded / fressh May
 In two of Taure / was in-to Cancre glyden
 So longe hath Mayus / in hire chaumbre abeden 1888
 As custume is / vn-to theise nobles alle
 A bryde shal nat / eten in the halle
 Til dayes foure / or thre dayes at the lest
 Passed ben / than late hire go to feest 1892
 The ferthe day complet / fro noon to noon
 whan that the heye masse / was I-don
 In halle syt this Ianuarie / and May
 As fressh as is / the bright Somers day [leaf 118, back] 1896
 And so byfel / how that this goode man
 Remembred him / vp-on this Damyan
 And seide / Seynt Marie / how may it be
 That Damyan / entendeth nat to me 1900
 Is he ay syke / or how may it betyde
 his squyers / which that stoden / pere beside
 Excused him / by-cause of his syknes
 which letted him / to don his besynes 1904
 Noon other cause / myght make him tarie
 That me forthynketh / quod this Ianuarie
 he is a gentil Squyer / be my trewthe
 If that he deyed / it were harm and reuthe 1908
 he is as wys / discrete / and as secree
 As ony man I knowe / of his degree
 And ther-to manly / and eke seruysable
 And for to be a man / thrifty and able 1912
 But after mete / as sone as euere I may
 I wyl my self / vysyte him / and eke May
 To don him al the comfort / that I can
 And for that word / him blissed euery man 1916
 That of his bounte / and his gentilnesse
 he wolde so comfort / in sekenesse
 his Squyer / for his gentil dede
 Dame quod this Ianuarie / take good hede 1920

At after mete / 3e with 3oure wommen alle
 whan 3e han ben in chaumbre / out of this halle
 That alle 3e gon / to se this Damyan
 Doth him disport / he is a gentil man 1924
 And tellith him / that I wyl him visite
 haue I no thyng / but rested me a lyte
 And spede 3ow fast / for I wyl a-byde
 Til that 3e slepe / fast be my syde 1928
 And with that word / he gan to him calle
 A Squyer / that was Marchal / of his halle
 And told him certeyne thynges / that he wolde
 This fressh May / hath streyt / hire weye holde 1932
 with alle hire wommen / vn-to Damyan
 Doun by hise beddis syde / sytte she than
 Comfortynge him / as goodly as she may
 This Damyan / whan he his tyme sey 1936
 In secrete wyse / his purs and eke his bylle
 In which that he wryten had / his wylle
 hath put in-to hire hond / with-uten more
 Saue that he sigheth / wonder depe and sore 1940
 And softly to hire / right thus seide he [leaf 114]
 Mercy / and that 3e nought bewreye me
 ffor I am ded / if that thyng be kydde
 This purs / she with-Inne hire bosom / hidde 1944
 And went hire wey / 3e gete no more of me
 But vn-to Ianuarie / a-geyn comen is she
 That oon his beddis syde / sat ful softe
 And takith hire / and kysseth hire ful ofte 1948
 And leid him doun to slepe / and that a-noon
 She feyned hire / as though she must gon
 There as 3e wote / that euery wyght must nede
 And whan she of this bille / hath taken hede 1952
 She rent it al to peces / at the last
 And in the preeue / softly it cast
 ¶ who stodieth now / but fair fresshe May
 A-doun / by olde Ianuarie / she lay 1956

That slepe / til the coughe hath him waked
 A-noon he preyed hire / to strepen hire al naked
 he wold of hire he seide / haue som plesaunce
 And seide / hire clothes / dide him combraunce 1960
 And she obeyeth him / be hire leef or loth
 But lest that precious folk / be with me wroth
 how that he wrought / I dar nat to 3ow telle
 Or wheither hire thought yt / paradys or helle 1964
 But heere I lete hem / werken in here wyse
 Til Euene song rong / and that they must a-ryse
 were it by destenye / or by auenture
 were it by enfluence / or by nature 1968
 Or constellacion / that in swich estate
 The heuene stod / in that tyme fortunate
 was / for to putte a bille / of venus werkes
 ffor al thyng hath tyme / as seyn theise clerkes 1972
 To euery womman / for to gete hire loue
 I can nought seye / but grete god a-boue
 That knoweth that noon acte / is causelees
 he deme of alle / for I wol holde my pees 1976
 But soth is this / how that this fressh May
 hath take swich impression / that day
 Of pitee / of this syke Damyan
 That fro hire hert / she ne dryue can 1980
 The remembraunce / for to don him eese
 Certeyne thought she / whom that this ping displese
 I rekke nought / for heere I him assure
 To loue him best / of ony creature 1984
 Though he no more had / than his sherte
 lo pitee / renneth sone / in gentil herte
 Heere may 3e se / how excellent fraunchise [leaf 114, back]
 In womman is / whan they hem narwe a-vyse 1988
 Soñ tyraunt is / as there be many oone
 That hath an herte / as hard as ony stone
 which wold han lete him / sterue in the place
 wel rather / than haue graunt him hire grace 1992

And hem reioysen / in here cruel pride
 And rekke nat / to ben an homycide
 This gentil Mayus / fulfilled of pitee
 Right of hire hond / a *lettre* maketh she 1996
 In which she *graunted* him / hire verray grace
 There lakketh nought / oonly / but day and space
 There as she myght / vn-to his lust suffice
 ffor it shal be / right as he wol deuysse 2000
 And whan she saw hire tyme / vp-oon a day
 To visite this Damyán / goth this May
 And softly this *lettre* / doun she threst
 vnder his Pilewe / rede it if him list 2004
 She taketh him by the hond / and hard him twist
 So secrely / that no wyght it wyst
 And bad him be al hole / and forth she went
 To Ianuarie / whan that he for hire sent 2008
 vp risith Damyán / the next morwe
 Al passed is / his syknes / and his sorwe
 he kembeth / he proyneth him / and pyketh
 he doth / al that his lady lust / and lyketh 2012
 And eke to Ianuarie / he goth as lowe
 As euere dide a dogge / for the bowe
 he is so plesaunt / to euery man
 ffor craft is al / who so that do yt can 2016
 That euery wyght is fayn / to speke him good
 And fully / in hise ladies grace / he stod
 Thus lete I Damyán / a-boute his nede
 And in my tale / forth I wyl procede 2020
 ¶ Some Clerkys holden / that felicite
 Stant in delite / and therfore certeyne he
 This noble Ianuarie / with al his myght
 In honest wyse / as longeth to a knyght 2024
 shope him to lyue / ful deliciously
 his housyng is arrayed / as honestly
 To his degree / was maked / as a kynges
 Amonges othere / of hise honest thynges 2028

he mad a gardeyne / walled al with stone
 A fairere gardeyne / what I no wher noone
 ffor out of doute / I verraily suppose
 That he that wrot / the Romauns of the Rose 2032
 Ne coude of it / the beaute wel deuyse [leaf 115]
 Ne Priapus / myght nought suffise
 Though he be god / of gardeynes for to telle
 The beaute of the gardeyn / and the welle 2036
 That stod vnder a laurer / alwey grene
 fful ofte tyme he / Pluto and his Quene
 Proserpina / and al hire feyree
 Disporten hem / and maken melodee 2040
 A-boute that welle / and daunsyng as men told
 ¶ This noble knyght / Ianuarie the old
 Swich deynte hath / in it to walke and pley
 That he wol suffre / no wyght bere the key 2044
 But he him self / for of the smal wyket
 he bar alwey / of siluere / a cleket
 With whiche / whan that him liste / he it vnshette
 And whan he wold pay / his wyues dette 2048
 In somer seson / thider wold he go
 And May his wyf / and no wyght but they two
 And thynges / which / that were nat don abedde
 he in the gardeyn / parfourmed hem / and spedde 2052
 And in this wyse / ful many a mery day
 lyueth this Ianuarie / and this fressh May
 ¶ But worldly ioye / may nought alwey endure
 To Ianuarie / ne to no creature 2056
 O sodeyne hap / o thow fortune vnstable
 lyke to the Skorpion / so disceyuable
 That flaterest with thyn hede / whan þou wylt styngre
 Thy tail is deth / thurgh thyn envenemyng 2060
 O brotel ioye / o swete venym queynte
 O monstre / that so sotelly / canst peynte
 Thy ȝiftes / vnder hewe of stedfastnes
 That thow disceyuest / bothe more and lesse 2064

Why hast þou / Ianuarie / thus disceyued
 That haddest him / for thy ful frend resceyued
 And now þou hast byreft him / bothe his eyen
 ffor sorwe of which / he desireth to deyen 2068
 Allas this noble Ianuarie / the free
 Amydde hise lust / and his prosperitee
 Is woxen blynd / and that al sodeynly
 he wepeth / he weyleth also / pitously 2072
 And there-with-al / the fire of Ielousie
 leste that his wyf / shulde falle in som folie
 So brent his hert / that he wolde fayn
 That som man / bothe hire and him had slayn 2076
 ffor neither after his deth / ne in his lyf
 Ne wolde he / þat she were / no loue ne wyf
 But euere lyue as a wydewe / in clothes blake [leaf 115, back]
 Shu as the Turtyl / that lost hath hire make 2080
 But at the last / after a moneth or twey
 his sorwe gan to a-swage / soth to sey
 ffor whan he wyst / it myght noon other be
 he paciently took / his aduersitee 2084
 Saue out of doute / he may nat forgoñ
 That he nas ielous / euere more in on
 Which ielousie / it was so outrageous
 That neither in Halle / ne in non oþer hous 2088
 Ne in non other place / neuere the moo
 he nolde suffre hire / for to ryde ne goo
 But if he had hond / on hire alwey
 ffor which ful ofte / wepeth fressh May 2092
 That loueth Damyan / so benygnely
 That she mot either deyen / sodeynly
 Or ellis she mot han him / as hire list
 She wayteth whanne / hire hert wold brest 2096
 ¶ vp-on that other syde / Damyan
 Bycomen is / the sorwefullest man
 That euere was / for neither nyght ne day
 Ne myght he speke / a word / to fressh May 2100

As to his purpos / of no swich matere
 But if that Ianuarie / must it heere
 That had an hand / vp-on hire / euere moo
 But natheles / be wrytyng to and froo 2104
 And pryue signes / wyst he what she ment
 And she knewe eke / the fyn of his entent
 ¶ O Ianuarie / what myght it the a-vaille
 Though þou myght seen / as fer as shippes seyлле 2108
 ffor as good is blynd / disceyued be
 As ben disceyued / whan a man may se
 lo Argue / which that had / an hondred eyen
 ffor al that euere he coude / poure or preyen 2112
 3et was he blynd / as god wot so ben moo
 That wenen wysely / that it be nat so
 Passe ouer / is an ease / I sey no more
 This fressh May / that I spak of bifore 2116
 In warme wex / hath enprented the cliket
 That Ianuarie bar / of the smal wyket
 By which / in-to his gardeyn / oft he went
 And Damyan that knew / al hire entent 2120
 The cliket countrefet / preuily
 There is nomore to seye / but hastily
 Som wonder by this cliket / shal betide
 Which 3e shuln heren / if 3e wiln a-bide [leaf 116] 2124
 ¶ O noble Ouyde / ful soth seist þou god wot
 What sleithe is it / though it be long and hot
 That loue nyl fynde it out / in som manere
 By Priamus and Tisbe / may 3e leere 2128
 Though they were kept ful longe / and streite ouer alle
 They ben accorded / rounyng thurgh a walle
 There no wyght coude han founde out / swich a sleight
 But now to the purpos / or that deyes eight 2132
 were passed / er that the monthe of Iull / byfelle
 That Ianuarie hath caught / so gret a wylle
 Thurgh eggyng of his wyf / him for to pley
 In his gardeyn / and no wyght but they twey 2136

That in a morwe / vn-to this May seith he
 Ryse vp my wyf / my loue / my lady free
 The turtles voys is herd / my dowe so swete
 The wynter is gon / with hise reynes wete 2140
 Come forth now / with thyne eyne Columbyne
 how meche fairere / ben thyne brestes / than is wyne
 The gardeyn is enclosed / al a-boute
 Come forth my swete spouse / for out of doute 2144
 Thow hast we wounded / in myn hert / O wyf
 No spot ne knowe I in the / in al my lyf
 Come forth / and late vs taken / oure disport
 I chese the for my wyf / and my comfort 2148
 Swiche olde / lewede wordes / vsed he
 On Damyan / a signe mad she
 That he shulde go byforn / with his clyket
 This Damyan / than hath opened the wyket 2152
 And in he stirt / and that in swich manere
 That no wyght / myght him se / neither heere
 And stille he syt / vnder a bussch a-noon
 This Ianuarie / as blynd as ony stoñ 2156
 With Mayus in his hond / and no wyght moo
 In-to this fressh gardeyn / is a-goo
 And claped to / the wyket / sodeynly
 Now wyf quod he / here is but 3e and I 2160
 Thow art the creature / that I best loue
 ffor be that lord / that syt in heuene a-boue
 leuer I had to deyen / on a knyf
 Than the offende / trewe dere wyf 2164
 ffor goddis sake / thynk how I the ches
 Nought for no coueitise / douteles
 But oonly for the loue / I had to the
 And though that I be olde / and may nat se 2168
 Beth to me trewe / and I wyl telle 3ow why [leaf 116, back]
 Thre thynges certes / shuln 3e wynne ther-by
 ffirst / loue of Crist / and to 3oure self / honour
 And al myn heritage / bothe toun and tour 2172

I ȝeue it ȝow / maketh chartres as ȝow list
 This shal be doñ / to-morwe or the sonne rist
 So wysly god my soule / brynge in-to blysse
 I preye ȝow first / in couenaunt ȝe me kisse 2176
 And though I be ielous / wyte me noughit
 ȝe ben so depe / enprented in my thought
 That whan I considre / ȝoure beaute
 And ther-with-al / the vnlikly age of me 2180
 I may noughit certes / though I shulde deye
 ffor-bere to ben / oute of ȝoure companye
 ffor verray loue / this is with-uten doute
 Now kisse we wyf / and late vs rome aboute 2184
 ¶ This fresshe May / whan she theise wordes herd
 Benygne / to Ianuarie she answerd
 But first and forward / she bygan to wepe
 ¶ I haue quod she / god wot / a soule to kepe 2188
 As wel as ȝe / and also myn honour
 And of my wyfhod / thilke tendre flour
 Which that I haue assured / in ȝoure hond
 Whan that the prest / to ȝow my body bond 2192
 Wherefore I wyl answee / in this manere
 By the leue of ȝow / that ben my lord so dere
 I preye to god / that neuere dawē the day
 That I ne sterue / as foule as a womman may 2196
 If euere I do / vn-to my kyn / that shame
 Or ellis if that I / enpeire so my name
 That I be fals / and if I do that lak
 Do stripe me / and put me in a sak 2200
 And in the nexte Ryuer / do me drenche
 I am a gentil womman / and no wenche
 Why speke ȝe thus / but men ben euere vntrewe
 And wommen han of ȝow / repref ay newe 2204
 ȝe conne noon other countenaunce / I leue
 But speke to vs / as of vntrust and repreue
 And with that word / she saw where Damyan
 Sat in a Bussh / and coughe she bygan 2208

And with hire fynger / a signe mad she
 That Damyan shulde / clymbe vp oon a tree
 That charged was / with fruyt / and vp he went
 ffor verrailly he knew / al hire entent 2212
 And euery signe / that she coude make
 Wel betir than Ianuarie / hire owen make [leaf 117]
 ffor in a *lettre* / she had told him alle
 Of this matere / how he werken shalle 2216
 And thus I lete him sitte / vp-oon this Perie
 And Ianuarie and May / romyng ful merye
 ¶ Bright was the day / and blew the firmament
 Phebus hath of gold / hise stremes doun sent 2220
 That gladen euery flour / with hise warmnes
 he was that tyme / in gemine · as I gesse
 But litel from his / declinacioñ
 Of Cancer / Iouis exaltacioñ 2224
 And so byfel / in that bright morwe tyde
 That in that gardeyn / in the ferther syde
 Pluto that is kyng / of fayrie
 And many a lady / in his companye 2228
 ffolwyng his wyf / the Quene of Proserpyne
 Ech after other / as right as a lyne
 While that she gadered / floures in the mede
 In Claudian / 3e moun the stories rede 2232
 how in his grisly Cart / he hire fette
 ¶ The kyng of fayrie / doun him sette
 vp-on a benche / of torues faire and grene
 And right a-noon / thus seide he to the Quene 2236
 Now wyf *quod* he / there may no wyght sey nay
 The experience / so preueth it euery day
 The tresoñ / which that womman doth to man
 Ten hondred thousand / wel tellen I can 2240
 Notable / of 3oure vntrewthe / and brotilnes
 O noble Salamoñ / rychest of Ryches
 ffulfilled of sapience / and of worldly glorie
 fful worthy ben thyne wordes / to memorie 2244

To euery wyght / that wyt and resoñ can
 Thus preiseth he ȝet / the bounte of man
 Among a thouȝsand men / ȝet fond I one
 But of wommen alle / ȝet fond I noone 2248
 Thus seith the kyng / that knoweth ȝoure wykkednes
 And Ihesus filius Sirac / as I gesse
 Ne speketh of ȝow / but selde reuerence
 A wylde fyre / and corrupte pestilence 2252.
 So fal vp-on ȝoure bodyes / ȝet to-nyght
 Ne se ȝe nouȝt / this honorable knyght
 Bycause allas / that he is blynd and old
 his owen man / shal make him cokewold 2256
 lo where he syt / the lechour oon the tree
 Now wol I graunte / of my mageste
 Vn-to this olde / blynde / worthy knyght [leaf 117, back]
 That he shal haue / a-ȝein / his eyen sight 2260
 And whan that his wyf / wold don him velanye
 Than shal he knowe / al hire harlotrye
 Bothe in reproof of hire / and othere moo
 ¶ Ȝee shal quod Proserpyne / wyl ȝe so 2264
 Now be my modres soule / sire I ȝow swere
 That I shal ȝeuen hire / sufficeaunt answer ¶ *verum quidem*
 And alle wommen after / for hire sake
 That though they be / in ony gilt take 2268
 with face bold / they shuln hem self excuse
 And beren hem down / that wolden hem accuse ¶ *Nota bene*
 ffor lakke of answer / noon of hem shal deyen
 Al had a man / sen a thyng / with hise eyen 2272
 Ȝet shuln we wommen / wisage it hardily
 And wepe and swere / and chide sotelly
 So that ȝe men / shuln ben as lewed as gees
 what rekketh me / of ȝoure auctorites 2276
 I wot wel / that this Iew / this Salamon
 ffond of vs wyues / fooles / many on
 But though that he fond / no good womman
 Ȝet hath there founden / many a-nother man 2280

wommen ful trewe / ful goode and vertuous
 wytnesse of hem / that dwellen / in cristis hous
 with martirdom / they preeued heere constaunce
 The Romayns Iestes / eke / make remembraunce 2284
 Of many a verrey / trewe wyf / also
 But sire be not wroth / al be it so
 Though that he seide / he fond no trewe womman
 I prey 3ow take this sentence / as I telle can 2288
 She ment thus / that in soueraigne bounte
 Nis noon but god / neither he ne she
 Ey for verrey god / that nys but one
 what make 3e so meche / of Salamone 2292
 what though he mad a temple / goddis hous
 what though he were riche / and glorious
 So mad he a temple eke / of fals goddis
 who myght don a thyng / that more for-boden is 2296
 Pardee / as fair as 3e / his name plaistre
 he was a lecchour / and an ydolatre
 And in his elde / he verray god forsoke
 And if that god ne hadde / as seith the boke 2300
 Spared him / for his fadres sake / he shulde
 haue lost his regne / rather than he wolde
 I sette nought / of al the velanye
 That he of wommen wrot / a botirflye [leaf 118] 2304
 I am a womman / nedes must I speke
 Or ellis swelle / til myn hert breke
 ffor sithe he seide / that we ben iangelers
 As euere hole mote I / brouke my tresses 2308
 I shal nat spare / for no curteisie
 To speke him harm / that wolde vs velanye
 Dame quod this Pluto / be no lengere wroth
 I 3eue it vp / but sithe I swor myn oth 2312
 That I wolde graunt him / his sight a-3eyne
 my word shal stonde / I warne 3ow certeyne
 I am a kyng / it syt me nought to lye
 And I quod she / a Quene of fayrie 2316

hire answer ahal she haue / I vndertake
 lat vs no moo wordes / here-of make
 for sothe I wyl no lengere / 3ow contrarie
 ¶ Now late vs turne a3ein / to Ianuarie 2320
 That in the gardeyn / with hise fair May
 Syngeth ful meriere / than the Popyngay
 3ow loue I best / and shal / and other noon
 So longe a-boute the Aleys / is he gon 2324
 Til he was come a-geyn / to thilke perye
 where as this Damyan / sitteth ful merye
 And heygh / a-mong theise fressh leues grene
 This fressh May / that is so bright and shene 2328
 Gan for to sighe / and seide allas my syde
 Now sire quod she / for ought that may betide
 I must haue on of the peeres / that I se
 Or I mot deye / so sore longeth me 2332
 To eten / of the smale peeres grene
 helpe for hire loue / that is heuene Quene
 I telle 3ow wel / a womman in my plight
 May haue to fruyt / so gret an appetit 2336
 That she may deyen / but she it haue
 Allas quod he / that I haue here no knaue
 That coude clymbe / allas allas quod he
 ffor I am blynde / 3e sire no force quod she 2340
 But wolde 3e vouchesaf / for goddis sake
 The Perie / with-Inne 3oure armes / for to take
 fful wel I wote / that 3e mystrosten me
 Than shulde I clymbe / wel I-now quod she 2344
 So I my fote / may sette vp-on 3oure bak
 Certes quod he / ther-of shal be no lak
 Myghit I 3ow helpen / with myn hert blode
 he stouped down / and she vp-on his bak stode 2348
 And caught hire by a twist / and vp she goth
 Ladyes I pray 3ow / that 3e be nat wroth [leaf 118, back]
 I can nat glose / I am a rude man
 And sodeynly a-noon / this Damyan 2352

Gan pullen vp the smok / and in he thronge
 And whan that Pluto / saw this grete wronge
 To Ianuarie / he ȝaf a-noon his sight
 That he thanne / right wel / se myght 2356
 And whan þat he / had caught his sight a-geyn
 Ne was there neuere man / of thyng so feyn
 But oon his wyf / his thought was euere moo
 vp-on the tree / he cast hise eyen two 2360
 And saw that Damyan / hys wyf had dressed
 In swich manere / it may nought ben expressed
 But if I wold speke / vncurteislye
 And vp he ȝaf a rooryng / and a crye 2364
 As doth the Moder / whan the child shal deye
 Out / help / allas / harrow / he gan to crye
 O stronge lady / store / what dost thou
 And she answered / sire / what eyleth ȝow 2368
 haue pacience and reson / in ȝoure mynde
 I haue ȝow holpe / of bothe ȝoure eyen blynde
 vp perile of my soule / I shal nat lyen
 As me was taught / to helen with ȝoure eyen 2372
 was no thyng betir / for to make ȝow se
 Than strogle with a man / vp-on a tree
 God wot I dide it / in ful good entent
 Strogle quod he / ȝa algate In it went 2376
 God ȝeue ȝow bothe / oon shames deth to deyen
 he swyued the / I saw it with myne eyen
 And elles be I hanged / by the hals
 And thanne is quod she / my medecyne fals 2380
 ffor certeynly / if that ȝe myght se
 ȝe wolde nat seye / theise wordes vn-to me
 ȝe han som glemeryng / and no parfyt sight
 I se quod he / as wel as euere I myght 2384
 Thanked be god / with bothe myne eyen twoo
 And be my trewthe / me thouȝt he dide the so
 ¶ ȝa mase mase / good sire quod she
 This thank haue I / for I made ȝow se 2388

Allas quod she / that euere I was so kynde
 Now dame quod he / late al passe out of mynde
 Come a-doun my leef / and if I haue mysseyd
 God help me so / as I am euele a-payd 2392
 But be my fadres soule / I wende haue sen
 how that this Damyan / had by the leyn
 And that thy smok / had leyn vp-oon thy brest [leaf 119]
 3a sire quod she / 3e moun seyn as 3ow lest 2396
 But sire / a man / that waketh out of his slepe
 he may nat so sodeynly / take kepe
 vp-oon a thyng / ne seyn it so parfitly
 That til he be a-waked / verrayly 2400
 Right so a man / þat long hath blynd I-be
 Ne may nought sodeynly / so wel se
 first / whan his sight / is newe comyn a-geyn
 As he that hath a day / or tweyne seyn 2404
 Til that 3oure sight / be satled a while
 There may ful many a sight / 3ow begyle
 Beth war I preye 3ow / for by heuene kyng
 fful many a man weneth / to seyn a thyng 2408
 And it is al a-nother / than it semeth
 he that mys conceyueth / mys demeth
 And with that word / she lepe doun fro the tree
 This Ianuarie / who is glad but he 2412
 he kissith hire / and clippeth hire ful ofte
 And oon hire wombe / he streked hire ful softe
 And to his Paleys / hom he hath hire ladde
 Now goode men / I preye 3ow alle beth gladde 2416
 Thus endeth heere my tale / of Ianuarie
 God blisse vs alle / and oure lady Seynt Marie ¶ Amen :
 ¶ Sic desinit fabula Mercatoris /

[on leaf 119]

Et incipit prologus Armigeri

EY goddis mercy / seide oure hoost tho
 Now swich a wyf / I preye god kepe me fro
 lo swich sleighites / and subtilitees 2421
 In wommen ben / for ay as besiens bees
 Ben they / vs sely men for to deceyue
 And froo a soth / euere wyl they weyue 2424
 By this Marchauntes tale / it preueth wel
 But doutelees / as trewe as any stel
 I haue a wyf / though that she pore be
 But of hire tonge / a labbyng shrewe is she 2428
 And yet she hath an hepe / of vices moo
 Ther-of no fors / lat alle suche thynges goo
 But wyte 3e what / in counseile be it seyde
 Me reweth sore / I am vn-to hire teyde 2432
 ffor and I shuld rekene / euery vyce
 Which that she hath / I-wys I were to nyce [leaf 119, back]
 And cause why / it shulde reported be
 And tolde to hire / of some of this meyne 2436
 Of whom it nedeth nat / for to declare
 Syn wommen connen oute / such chaffare
 And eke my wyt / suffiseth nat ther-to
 To tellen al / wherfore my tale is do 2440

[As there is no room in this print for the Latin notes in the margin of the MS., they are put here, with the numbers of the lines to which they refer.]

l. 1811. vxor est diligenda / quia donum dei est / Ihesus filius Sirac / domus & diuicie dantur a parentibus / a domino autem proprie / vxor bona vel prudens :—Dona fortune.

l. 1827. fficiamus ei adiutorium et extracta costa de corpore Ade fecit Euam & dixit propter hec relinquet homo patrem et matrem et adherebit &c. et erunt duo in carne vna :—

l. 1862. ¶ Iacobus enim per consilium matris sue Rebecce &c.

l. 1866. ¶ Iudit &c. de manibus Oloferni.

l. 1869. ¶ Et Abigail per suum bonum consilium virum suum Nabal ab ira dau[i]t liberauit.

l. 1871. ¶ Ester &c. Iudeos per bonum consilium simul cum Mardocheo in regno assuri &c.

l. 1876. ¶ Seneca / sicut nihil est superius benigna coniuge / ita nihil est crudelius infesta muliere :—

l. 1878. ¶ Cato / vxoris linguam si frugi est ferre memento :—

l. 1883. ¶ Bona mulier / fidelis custos est & bona domus :—

l. 1885. ¶ Apostolus Paulus ad Ephesianos. Diligite vxores vestras sicut Christus dilexit ecclesiam &c.

l. 1887. Apostolus / ita viri debent diligere vxores suas ut corpora sua quia qui suam vxorem diligit seipsum diligit nemo vnquam carnem suam odio habuit set nutrit & fouet eam / & postea vnusquisque suam vxorem sicut se ipsum diligit :—

[on leaf 119, back]

Squyere come ner / if it ȝoure wyll be	
And seye som-what of loue / for certes ȝe	
Konen ther-oon / as meche as any man	
Nay sire quod he / but swich thyng as I can	4
With hertly wyll / for I wil nought rebelle	
A-geyn ȝoure lust / a tale wol I ȝow telle	
haue me excused / if I speke amys	
My wyl is good / and lo my tale is this	8
¶ Sic desinit prologus	

[on leaf 119, back]

& Incipit fabula Armigeri

At Saray / in the lond of Tartarye
 There dwelled a kyng / that werred Russye
 Thorough which there deyed / many a doughty
 This noble kyng was cleped / Cambyuscan [man
 Which in his tyme / was of so gret renoun 13
 That ther was nowher / in no regioñ
 So excellent a lord / of al thyng
 him lakked no thyng / that longeth to a kyng 16
 As of the secte / of which that he was born
 he kept his lay / to which that he was sworn
 And ther-to he was hardy / wys and riche
 And pitous and Iust / alwey I-liche 20
 Sooth of his word / benygne and honourable
 A[n]d of his corage / alwey sad and stable
 3ong fressh and strong / in armes desirous
 As any bachelor / of al his hous 24
 A faire persone he was / and fortunat
 And kept alwey so wel / Real estat
 That there nas no-wher / such an-other man
 ¶ This noble kyng / this Tartre Cambiuscan 28
 hadde two sones / on Elfeta his wyf
 Of which the eldest highit / Algarsyf
 That other sone / was called Camballo
 A doughter hadde / this worthy kyng also 32
 That 3ongest was / and highit Canacee [leaf 120]
 But for to telle 3ow / al hire beaute
 It lith nought in my tonge / or my konnyng
 I dar nought vndertake / so heigh a thyng 36

Myn englyssh eke is / insufficient	
It must ben a Rethor / excellent	
That coude hise colours / longyng for that art	
If he shulde hire discryuen / euery part	40
I nam noon suche / I mot speke as I can	
And so byfel / that whan this Cambiuscan	
hadde twenty wynter / born his Diademe	
As he was wont / fro 3ere to 3ere I deme	44
he lete the feste / of his Natiuitee	
Do crien thurgh-out Sarray / his Citee	
The last ydus of March / after the 3er	
Phebus the Sonne / ful iolyf was and cler	48
ffor he was ney / his exaltacioñ	
In martes face / & in his mancioñ	
In Aries / the coleryk hote signe	
fful lusty was the wedir / & benygne	52
ffor which the foules / ageyn the sonne shene	
What for the sesoñ / & the 3onge greene	
fful loude songen / in here affecciions	
hem semed haue geten hem / protecciions	56
Ageyns the swerd of wynter / kene & colde	
This Cambiuscan / of which I haue 3ow tolde	
In real vestiment / syt on his days	
With Diademe ful heigh / in his paleys	60
And halt his feste / so solempne & so riche	
That in this world / ne was pere noon it liche	
Of which / if I shal tellen / al the array	
Than wold it occupie / a someres day	64
And eke it nedeth nat / for to deuyse	
At euery cours / the ordre of here seruyse	
I wyl nought tellen / of here straunge sewes	
Ne of here swannes / ne here heronsewes	68
[.	
.	
.	
. no gap in the MS.]	72

I wyl nought tarien 3ow / for it is pryme
 And for it is no fruyt / but losse of tyme
 vn-to my first / I wyl haue myn retours
 And so byfel after / the thridde cours 76
 whil that this kyng syt thus / in his nobleye
 Herkenyng his mynstralles / here thynges pleye
 Biforⁿ him at the bord / deliciously
 In at the halle dore / al sodeynly [leaf 120, back] 80
 There cam a knyght / vp-on a steede of Bras
 And in his hand / a brode Myroure of glas
 Vp-on his thombe / he hadde of gold a ryng
 And by his syde / a naked swerd hangyng 84
 And vp he rideth / vn-to the heigh bord
 In al the halle / ne was there spoke a word
 ffor merueille of this knyght / him to byholde
 fful bisily they wayten / 3onge and olde 88
 ¶ This straunge knyght / that cam thus sodeynly
 Al armed saue his hed / ful richely
 Salueth kyng and Quene / and lordes alle
 By ordre / as they setyn / in the halle 92
 With so heigh reuerence / and obeisaunce
 As wel in speche / as in his countenaunce
 That Gawayn / with his olde curteisye
 Though he were come a-geyn / out of fairye 96
 Ne coude him nought amende / with a word
 And after this / bifore the heigh bord
 he with a manly voice / seide his message
 After the fourme vsed / in his langage 100
 With-uten vice of silable / or lettre
 And for his tale / shulde seme the bettre
 Accordant to his wordes / was his chiere
 As techeth art of speche / hem that it lere 104
 Al be it / that I can nought / sowne his stile
 Ne can nought clymben / ouer so heigh a stile
 3et sey I this / that as to comune entent
 Thus meche amounteth / al þat euere he ment 108

If it so be / that I haue it in mynde
 ¶ He seide the kyng of Arabe / and of Ynde
 My lige lord / on this solempne day
 Salueth 3ow / as he best can and may 112
 And sendeth 3ow / in honour of 3oure feste
 By me / that am al redy / at 3oure heste
 This steede of Bras / that esily and wel
 Can in the space / of oo day naturel 116
 That is to seyn / in foure and twenty houres
 Where-so 3ow list / in drought or ellis shoures
 Beren 3oure body / in-to euery place
 To which 3oure herte wylneth / for to pace 120
 With-outen wem of 3ow / thurgh foule and fair
 Or if 3ow list / to fleighe as heigh in the eyr
 As doth an Egle / whan him list to sore [leaf 121]
 This same Steede / shal bere 3ow euere more 124
 With-outen harm / til 3e be there 3ow list
 Though that 3e slepen / on his bak & rest
 And turne ageyn / with writhyng of a pyn
 he that it wrought / he coude many a gyn 128
 he wayted many / a constellacioñ
 Or he had don / this operacioñ
 And knew ful many / a sel / & many a bonde
 ¶ This Mirour eke / that I haue in myn honde 132
 hath swich a myght / that men moun in it se
 Whan there shal fallen / any aduersitee
 vn-to 3oure regne / or to 3oure self also
 And openly / who is 3oure frend or foo 136
 And ouer al this / if any lady bright
 hath set hire herte / on any maner wyght
 If he be fals / she shal his treson see
 his newe loue / and al his subtiltee 140
 So openly / there shal no thyng hyde
 Wherefore / a-geyns this lusty someres tyde
 This Myrour & this Ryng / that 3e may se
 he hath sent / to my lady Canacee 144

3oure excellente doughter / that is here
 The vertu of the Ryng / if ye wiln heere
 Is this / that if hire list / it / for to were
 vp-on hire thombe / or in hire purs it bere 148
 There nys no foule / that flieth vnder the heuene
 That she ne shal wel / vnderstonde his steuene
 And knowe his menyng / openly and pleyne
 And answer him / in his langage ageyn 152
 And euery gras / that groweth vp-on rote
 She shal eke knowe / & whom it wol do bote
 Al ben hise woundes / neuere so depe & wyde
 ¶ This naked swerd / that hangeth be my syde 156
 Swich vertu hath / that what man þat 3e smyte
 Thurgh-out his armure / it wil kerue & byte
 Were it as thikke / as is a braunched ook
 And what man þat is wounded / with the strok 160
 Shal neuere be hol / til that 3ow list of grace
 To stroke him with the plat / in thilke place
 There he is hurt / this is so meche to seyn
 3e mote with the plat swerd / a-geyn 164
 Stroke him in the wounde / and it wol close
 This is a verray soth / with-outen glose
 It failleth not / whil it is in 3oure wolde [leaf 121, back]
 ¶ And whan this knyght / hath thus his tale I-tolde 168
 he rideth out of halle / and doun he light
 his Steede which that shone / as sonne bright
 Stant in the courte / as stille as ony ston
 This knyght is to his chaumber / lad a-non 172
 And is vnarmed / and to mete I-sette
 The presentes / ben ful richelich I-fette
 This is to seyn / the swerd and the Mirour
 And born a-non / vn-to the heigh Tour 176
 With certeyne officers / ordeyned therfore
 And to Canacee / the Ryng is bore
 Solempnely / there she sat at the table
 But sekerly / with-outen any fable 180

The hors of Bras / that can nought be remewed
 Is stant as it were / to the ground I-glewed
 There may no man / out of that place it dryue
 ffor non engyne / of wyndas or polyue 184
 And cause why / for they conne nought the craft
 And therefore in the place / they han it laft
 Til that the knyght / hath taught hem the manere
 To voiden him / as ȝe shuln after here 188
 ¶ Greet was the prees / that swarmeth to and froo
 To gauren on this hors / that stondesth so
 ffor it so heigh was / & so brode and longe
 So wel proporcioned / for to be stronge 192
 Right as it were a Steede / of lumbardie
 There-with so horsly / and so quyk at eye
 As it a gentil poleis / courser were
 ffor certes from his taille / vn-to his ere 196
 Nature ne art / ne coude him nought amende
 In no degree / as al the peple wende
 But euere moo / here moost wondre was
 how that it coude gon / & was of bras 200
 It was a fayrie / as the peple semed
 Diuerse folk / diuersely han demed
 As many hedes / as many wyttes ben
 They mormered / as doth a swarm of been 204
 And maden skyles / after here fantasies
 Rehersyng / of this olde poetries
 And seiden it was like / the pegasee ¶ *id est equus pe-
 gaseus / percus 4^{to}*
 The hors that hadde / wenges for to flee
 Or ellis it was / the Grekes hors sinoñ 209
 That brought Troye / to destruccioñ
 As men moun / in theise old gestes rede
 Myn herte quod on / is eueremo in drede [leaf 122] 212
 I trowe some men of armes / ben there-Inne
 That shapen hem / this Citee for to wynne
 It were right good / that al such thyng were knowe
 An other rouned / to his felawe lowe 216

And seide he lyeth / for it is rather lyk
 An apparence I-made / by some magyk
 As iogeloures pleyen / at thise grete
 Of sondry doutes / thus they langle & trete 220
 As lewede peeple damen / comunely
 Of thynges that ben made / more subtilly
 Than they can / in here lewednes comprehende
 They demen gladly / to the baddere ende 224
 ¶ And some of hem wondred / on the Mirour
 That born was vp / vn-to the maister Tour
 how men myght in it / swich thynges se
 Another answered & seide / it myght wel be 228
 Naturally / by composicions
 Of anglys / and of aligh reflexions
 And seiden / that in Rome / was swich on
 They spoken of Alocen / and vitulon 232
 Of Aristotle / that wretyn in here lyues
 Of queynt Miroures / and of perspectyues
 As knowen they / that han here bokes herd
 And other folk / han wondred on the sword 236
 That wolde percen / thurgh-out euery thyng
 And feln in speche / of Thelephus the kyng
 And of Achilles / for his queynt spere
 for he coude with it / bothe hele and dere 240
 Right in swich gise / as men moun with the sword
 Of which right now / 3e han 3oure seluen herd
 They speken of sondry hardyng / of metal
 And speken of medicynes / ther-with-al 244
 And how & whanne / it shulde I-harded be
 Which is vnknowe / algates vn-to me
 Tho speken they / of Canaces ryng
 And seiden alle / that swich a wonder thyng 248
 Of craft of Rynges / herd they neuere non
 Saue that he Moyses / and kyng Salamon
 hadden a name of konnyng / in swich art
 Thus seith the peeple / & drawen hem a-part 252

But nathelees some seiden / that it was
 Wonder to make / of fern asshen / glas
 And ȝet is glas / nought lyke asshen of fern
 And for they han I-knowen it / so fern [leaf 122, back] 256
 Therfore cesseth here iangelyng / & here wonder
 As sore wonder some / on cause of thonder
 On ebbe on flode / on gossomer & on myst
 And on alle thyng / til þat the cause is wist 260
 Thus iangle they / & demen & deuysen
 Til that the kyng / gan fro the bord arise
 ¶ Phebus hath lost / the angle mediornal
 And ȝet ascendyng / was the best roial 264
 The gentil leon / with his aldiran
 Whan that this tartre kyng / Cambyuscan
 Ros fro his bord / there as he sat ful heyne
 Bifore him goth / the loude mynstralcye 268
 Til he come to his chambre / of parementȝ
 There as there sounen / diuerse Instrumentȝ
 That it is like an heuene / for to here
 Now dauncen lusty venus / children dere 272
 ffor in the flissch / here lady sat ful heyne
 And loketh on hem / with a frendlich eye
 This noble kyng / is set vp-on his Trone
 This straunge knyght / is to him fet ful sone 276
 ¶ And on the daunce he goth / with Canacee
 here is the reuel / and the Iolitee
 That is nat able / a dul man to deuysen
 he must han knowen loue / and his seruyse 280
 And ben a feestlich man / as fressch as May
 That shulde ȝow deuysen / swich a-ray
 who coude telle ȝow / the fourme of daunces
 So vnouth / and swich fressch countenaunces 284
 Swich subtil lokyng / and dissimulynges
 ffor drede / of gelous mennes / aparceyuynges
 Noman but launcelot / and he is ded
 Therefore I passe / of al this lustied 288

I sey no more / but in this Iolynesse
 I lete hem / til men to the Soper dresse
 The Styward / bit spices for to hye
 And eke the wyn / and al this melodye 292
 The vsshers / and the Squery is gon
 The spices and the wyn / is come anon
 They ete & drynke / and whan this had an ende
 vn-to the temple / as reson was / they wende 296
 ¶ The seruyse don they / & soupen al be day
 what nedeth to 3ow / rehernen here / here array
 Eche man wot wel / that a kynges fest
 Hath plentee to the meest / and to the leest 300
 And deyntes moo than ben / in my knowyng [leaf 123]
 At after soper / goth this noble kyng
 To sen this hors / of Bras / with al a route
 Of ladyes / and of lordes / him a-boute 304
 ¶ Swich wondryng was there / on this hors of Bras
 That syn the gret assege / of Troie was
 There as men wondred / on an hors also
 Ne was there swich a wondryng / as was tho 308
 But fynaly / the kyng axed the knyght
 The vertu of this courser / and the myght
 And preyed him to telle / his gouernaunce
 This hors a-non / gan for to trippe & daunce 312
 whan that the knyght / leid hand vp-on his reyne
 And seide sire / there nys no more to seyne
 But whan 3ow list / to riden any where
 3e moten trille a pyn / stant in his Ere 316
 which I shal tellen 3ow / betwixe vs two
 3e moten nempne him / to what place also
 Or to what contre / that 3ow list to ryde
 And whan 3e come there / as 3ow list abide 320
 Bid him decende / and trille an other pyn
 ffor pere-Inne lith the effect / of al the gyn
 And he wol doun decende / & don 3oure wille
 And in that place / he wol abyden stille 324

Though al the world / the contrarie had swore
 he shal nat thens be drawe / ne be bore
 Or if ȝow list / to bidde him / thens gon
 Trille this pyn / & he wol vanysshe a-non 328
 Out of the sight / of euery manere wyght
 And come a-geyn / be it day or nyght
 whan that ȝow list / to clepen him a-geyn
 In swich a gyse / as I shal to ȝow seyn 332
 Betwixen ȝow & me / & that ful sone
 Ryde whan ȝow list / there is no more to done
 ¶ Enformed whan the kyng was / of this knyght
 And hath conceyued / in his wyt a-right 336
 The manere & the fourme / of al this thyng
 fful glad and blithe / this noble lusty kyng
 Repaireth to his reuel / as byforñ
 The brydel is / in-to the Tour I-born 340
 And kept among his lueles / lief & deere
 The hors vanysshed / I not in which manere
 Out of here sight / ȝe gete no more for me
 But thus I leete / in lust and Iolitee 344
 This Cambyuscan / his lordes festeinyge
 Til wel neygh / the day bygan to springe [leaf 123, back]

¶ Explicit prima pars [In margin. No break in MS.]

[PART II.]

The norice of digestiō / the sleep
 Gan on·hem wynke / & bad hem taken kep 348
 That mechel drynk & labour / wyl haue rest
 And with a galpyng mouth / hem alle he kest
 And seide that it was tyme / to lye a-doun
 ffor blod was / in his dominaciō 352
 Cherisheth blood / natures frend quod he
 They thanked him galpyng / by two by three
 And euery wyght / gan drawe him to his rest
 As sleep hem bad / they toke it for the best 356

here dremes shuln nat now / ben tolde for me
 ful were here hedes / of fumositee
 That causeth dreem / of which there is no charge
 They slepe / til that it was / prime large 360
 The moste parte / but it were Canacee
 She was ful mesurable / as wommen be
 ffor of hire fader / had she taken leue
 To gon to rest / sone after it was eue 364
 hire list nat appalled / for to be
 Ne on the morwe / vnfestliche for to se
 And slept hire first sleep / & thanne a-woke
 ffor swich a ioie / she in hire hert toke 368
 Bothe of hire queynt Ryng / & hire Mirour
 That twenty tyme / she chaunged hire colour
 And in hire sleep / right for the inpressiõ
 Of hire Mirour / she had a visiõ 372
 wherfore / er that the sonne / gan vp glyde
 She cleped vp-on hire Maistres / hire beside
 And seide / that hire list for to ryse
 Theise olde wommen / that ben gladly wyse 376
 As is hire Maistresse / answered a-non
 And seide Madame / whider wolde 3e gon
 Thus erly / for the folk ben alle in rest
 I wil quod she arrisen / for me lest 380
 No lengere for to slepe / and walke a-boute
 hire Maistresse clepeth wommen / a gret route
 And vp they risen / wel an ten or twelue
 vp riseth fressh Canacee / hire selue 384
 As rody and bright / as doth the 3onge Sonne
 That in the Ram / is foure degrees vp ronne
 Non heighere was he / whan she redy was
 And forth she walketh / esily a paas 388
 Arrayed after the lusty seson / swote
 lightly for to pleye / & walke on foote
 Nat but with fyue or sexe / of hire meyne [leaf 124]
 And in a trenche / forth in the Park goth she 392

¶ The vapor / which / that from the erthe glode
 Made the Sonne to seme / rody and brode
 But natheles it was / so fair a sight
 That it made alle here hertes / for to light 396
 What for the Seson / & the morwenyng
 What for the foules / that she herd syng
 ffor right a-non / she wist what they ment
 Right by here song / & knew al here entent 400
 ¶ The knotte why / that euery tale is told
 If it be taried / til the lust be cold
 Of hem / that after it / han herkened ȝore
 The sauour passeth / euere lengere the more 404
 ffor fulsumnesse / of his prolixitee
 And by this same reson / thynketh me
 I shulde vn-to the knot / condescende
 And maken of here walkyng / sone an ende 408
 ¶ Amydde a tree ful drye / as white as chalk
 As Canace was pleiyng / in hire walk
 There sat a faucon / ouer hire hed ful heye
 That with a pitous voice / so gan to crye 412
 That al the wode / resounded of hire cry
 I-betyn had she hire self / so pitously
 with bothe hire wenges / til the red blod
 Ran endelong the tree / there as she stood 416
 And euere in on alwey / she cried and shrighȝt
 And with hire beek / hire seluen she so twighȝt
 That there nas tygre / ne so cruel beste
 That dwelleth either in wode / or in foreste 420
 That nolde han wept / if that he wepe coude
 ffor sorwe of hire / she shrighȝt alwey so loude
 ¶ ffor þere was neuere ȝet / no man a-lyue
 If that I coude / a faucon wel discryue 424
 That herd of swich an other / of fairnesse
 As wel of plumage / as of gentilnesse
 Of shaþ / of al that myghȝt I-rekened be
 A faucon peregryn / than semed she 428

Of fremd land / and eueremo there she stod
 She swoughned now and now / for lakke of blood
 Til wol ny is she fallen / fro the Tree
 This faire kynges doughter / Canacee 432
 That on hire fyngre / bare the queynt Ryng
 Thurgh which / she vnderstod wel / euery thyng
 That any foul / may in his ledne seyn 435
 And coude answer him / in his ledne a-geyn [leaf 124, back]
 hath vnderstonden / what this faucon seide
 And wel neigh for the routhe / almeest she deiede
 And to the tree / she goth ful hastily
 And on this faucon / loketh pytously 440
 And held hire lappe a-brod / for wel she wiste
 The faucon must fallen / fro the twiste
 when that it swoughneth next / for lak of blood
 A longe while / to wayten hire she stood 444
 Til at the laste / she spak in this manere
 vn-to the hauke / as 3e shuln after heere
 what is the cause / if that it be to telle
 That 3e ben / in this furyal peyne of helle 448
 Quod Canacee / vn-to this hauke a-boue
 Is this for sorwe of deth / or losse of loue
 ffor as I trowe / theise ben causes two
 That causen moost / a gentil herte woo 452
 Of other harm / it nedeth nat to speke
 ffor 3e 3oure self / vp-on 3oure self 3ow wreke
 which preeueth wel / that either Ire or drede
 Mote ben encheson / of 3oure cruel dede 456
 Syn that I se / noon other wyght / 3ow chace
 ffor loue of god / as doth 3oure seluen grace
 Or what may ben 3oure helpe / for west north est
 Ne saw I neuere or now / no bryd nor beest 460
 That ferde with him self / so pitously
 3e slee me with 3oure sorwe / verreyly
 I haue of 3ow / so gret compassion
 ffor goddes loue / come fro the tree a-doun 464

And as I am / a kynges doughter trewe
 If that I verreyly / the causes knewe
 Of youre disese / if it lay in my myght
 I wolde amende it / or that it were nyght 468
 As wisly helpe me / gret god of kynde
 And herbes shal I / right I-nowe fynde
 To hele with youre hurtes / hastily
 Tho shrighȝ this faucon / ȝet more pitously 472
 Than euere she dide / & fel to grounde anon
 And lith a-swoughne / as ded as lith a ston
 Til Canacee / hath in hire lappe / hire take
 In-to that tyme / she gan of swough a-wake 476
 And after that / she of swouȝnyng gan a-breyde
 Right in hire haukes ledne / thus she seide
 ¶ That pitee renneȝh sone / in gentil herte
 ffelyng his similitude / in peynes smerte 480
 Is preueed al day / as men moun it se
 As wel by werk / as by auctoritee [leaf 125]
 ffor gentil herte / kitheth gentillesse
 I se wel ȝe han / of my distresse 484
 Compassiō / my faire Canacee
 Of verray wommanly / benygnetee
 That nature / in ȝoure principiis hath set
 But for non hope / for to fare the bet 488
 But for to obeye / vn-to ȝoure herte free
 And for to maken othere / I-war by me
 As by the whelp / is chastised the leon
 Right for that cause / and that conclusiō 492
 whil that I haue a leiser / and a space
 Myn harm I wil confessen / or I pace
 And whil that oon / hire sorwe tolde
 That other weȝ / as she to water wolde 496
 Til that the faucon / bad hire to be stille
 And with a syke / right thus she seide hire wyll
 ¶ There I was bred / allas that ilke day
 An forstred in a roche / of marbel gray 500

So tenderly / that no thyng eyled me
 I nyst nat / what was aduersitee
 Til I coude flee / fal heigh vnder the sky
 Tho dwelled a Tercelet / me fast by 504
 That semed welle / of al gentillesse
 Al were he ful of tresofi / & falsnesse
 It was so wrapped / vnder humble chere
 And vnder hew of trouthe / in such manere 508
 vnder plesaunce / & vnder besy peyne
 That no wyght wold han wend / he coude feyne
 So diep in greyn / he dyed hise colours
 Right as a serpent / hideth vnder floures 512
 Til he may sen his tyme / for to byte
 Right so / this god of loues ypocrite
 Doth his sermons / and obeisaunces
 And kepeth in semblaunt / alle his obseruaunces 516
 That sovneth in-to gentillesse / of loue
 As on a Toumbe / is al the fair a-boue
 And vnder is the cors / swich as ȝe wote
 Swich was this ypocrite / bothe cold and hote 520
 And in this wyse / he serued his entente
 That saue the fend / noon wist what he ment
 Til he so longe had weped / and compleyned
 And many ȝere / his seruyse to me feyned 524
 Til that myn herte / to pitous & to nyce
 Al Innocent / of his crowned malice
 So fered of his deth / as thought me
 vp-on hise othes / and on hise seurtee [leaf 125, back] 528
 Graunted him loue / on this condicioñ
 That euere mo / myn honour & renouñ
 were saued / bothe pryue and apert
 This is to seyn / that after his desert 532
 I ȝaf him al myn hert / & al my thought
 God wot and he / that other weyes nought
 And toke his herte / in chaunge of myn for ay
 But soth is seide / gon sithen many a day 536

A trewe wyght and a thef / thynke nat on
 ¶ And whan he sey the thyng / so fer I-gon
 That I had graunted him / fully my loue
 In swich a gyse / as I haue seid a-boue 540
 And zeuen him / my trewe herte / as free
 As he swore / that he gaf his herte to me
 A-non this Tigre / ful of doublenesse
 fel on his knees / with so deuout humblesse 544
 with so heigh reuerence / as by his chere
 So like a gentil louere / of manere
 So rauysshed / as it semed for the ioye
 That neuere Iason / or Paris of Troye 548
 Iason certes / ne non other man
 Syn lameth was / that alderfirst bygan
 To louen two / as wryten folk byforñ
 Ne neuere syn / the first man was born 552
 Ne coude man / by twenty thousand parte
 Countrefete the sophimes / of his arte
 Ne were worthy / don bokelyn his galoche
 There doublenesse or feynyng / shulde approche 556
 Ne so coude thanke a wyght / as he did me
 his manere was an heuene / for to se
 To any womman / were she neuere so wys
 So peynted he and kempt / at poynt deys 560
 As wel hise wordes / as his countenaunce
 And so loued him / for his obeisaunce
 And for the trouthe / I demed in his herte
 That if so were / that any thyng him smerte 564
 Al were it neuere so lite / and I it wiste
 Me thought I felt deth / myn herte twiste
 And shortly so ferforth / this thyng is wente
 That my wyl was / his willes Instrumente 568
 This is to seyn / my wyl obeyed his wille
 In alle thyng / as fer as reson fille
 keepyng the boundes / of my worship euere
 Ne neuere hadde I thyng / so lief ne leuere 572

As hym god woot / ne neuere shal no moo [leaf 126]
 This last lengere / than a 3er or twoo
 That I supposed of him / nought but good
 But fynally / thus at the laste it stod 576
 That fortune wolde / that he must twynne
 Out of that place / which that I was Inne
 where me was woo / that is no question
 I can nat make of it / discripcion 580
 ffor oo thyng dar I tellen / boldely
 I knowe what is the peyne of deth / ther-by
 Swich harm I felt / for he ne myght byleue
 So on a day of me / he tok his leue 584
 So sorweful eke / that I wende verreily
 That he had felt / as muchel harm as I
 whan that I herd him speke / & saugh his hewe
 But natheles I thought / he was so trewe 588
 And eke that he repeire / shulde a-geyn
 with-Inne a litel tyme / soth to seyn
 And reson wolde eke / that he must go
 ffor his honour / as often happeth so 592
 That I made vertu / of necessite
 And toke it wel / syn that it must be
 As I best myght / I hidde fro him my sorwe
 And tok him by the hand / Seynt Iohn to borwe 596
 And seide him thus / I am 3owres al
 Beth swich as I to 3ow / haue ben & shal
 what he answered / it nedeth nat reherce
 who can seyn bet / than he / and don werse 600
 whan he hath al wel seid / than hath he don
 Therefore byhoued hire / a ful long spon
 That shal ete with the fend / thus herd I seye
 So at the laste / he must forth his weye 604
 And forth he fleeth / til he come pere him luste
 ¶ Whan it come him to purpos / for to reste ¶ *reditu suo sin-*
 I trowe that he hadde / thilke text in mynde *gula gaudent :*
 That al thyng / repairyng to his kynde 608

Gladeth him self / thus seyn men as I gesse
 Men louen of propre kynde / newfangelnesse
 As briddes don / that men in kages fede
 ffor though thow nyght & day / take of hem hede 612
 And strowe here cage / as faire & softe as sylk
 And zeue hem sugre / hony bred and mylk
 3et right a-non / as that his dore is vppe
 he with his feet / wol spurne doun his cuppe 616
 And to the wode he wole / & wormes ete
 So newefongel ben they / of here mete [leaf 128, back]
 And louen nouelries / of propre kynde
 No gentillesse of blod / ne may hem bynde 620
 So ferde this Terecelet / allas that day
 Though he were gentil born / & fressh & gay
 And goodlich for to sen / and humble and free
 he sey vp-on a tyme / a kyte flee 624
 And sodeynly / he loued / this kyte so
 That al his loue / is clene fro me a-go
 And hath his trouthe I-falsed / in this wyse
 Thus hath the kyte my loue / in hire seruyse 628
 And I am born / with-uten remedie
 And with that word / this faucoñ gan to crie
 And swoughned eft / in Canacees barm
 ¶ Gret was the sorwe / for the haukes harm 632
 That Canacee / & alle hire wommen made
 They nyste how they myghte / the faucon glade
 But Canacee hom bereth hire / in hire lappe
 And softly in plaistris / gan hire wrappe 636
 There as she with hire hook / had hurt hire selue
 Now can nat Canacee / but herbes delue
 Out of the ground / and make salues newe
 Of herbes precieuse / and fyne of hewe 640
 To helen with this hauke / fro day to nyght
 She doth hire besynesse / with al hire myght
 And by hire beddes hed / she mad a Mewe
 And couered it / with veluettes blewe 644

In signe of trouthe / that is in wommen sene
 And al with-oute the Mewe / is peynted grene
 In which were peynted / alle theise false foules
 As ben theise Tidifs / Tercelletes and Oules 648
 Right for despit / were peynted hem be-side
 And Pies on hem / for to crie and chide
 That lete I Canacee / hire hauke kepyng
 I wol no more as now / speke of hire Ryng 652
 Til it come eft to purpos / for to seyn
 how that this faucon / gat hire loue a-geyn
 Repentaunt / as the story telleth vs
 By mediacion / of Kambalus 656
 The kynges sone / of which that I 3ow tolde
 But hens-forth / I wol my processe holde
 To speke of auentures / and of batailles
 That neuere 3et was herd / so greeete meruailles 660
 ffirst wol I telle 3ow / of Cambyuscan
 That in his tyme / many a citee wan
 And after wol I speke / of Algerlif
 how that he wan / Theodera to his wif 664
 ffor whom ful ofte / in gret perile he was [leaf 127]
 Ne had he ben holpen / by the Steede of Bras
 And after wol I speken / of Kambalo
 That faught in listes / with the bretheren two 668
 ffor Canacee / or that he myght hire wynne
 And there I lefte / I wil a3ein begynne

¶ Explicit secunda pars

¶ Here endith the Squyeres tale / as meche as
 Chaucer made.

[the rest of leaf 127 & back, blank; leaf 128 gone.]

& incipit prologus Clerici Oxonie [Eg. 2726, on leaf 147]

In feip Squyer / þu hast þe wele y-quitte
 And gentilly / I preise wele thy witte
Koth þe ffrankeleyn / consideryng þy youthee
 So felyngly þou spekest / sir I the alough þe 676
 As to my dome / þere is none that is here
 Of elloquence / þat shaþ be þy pere
 Yf þat þou lyve / god yeue þe gode chaunce
 And in vertue / send the contynuaunce 680
 For of thy speche / I haue grete deynte [leaf 147, back]
 I haue a son / and by þe Trinitee
 I hade leuer / þan .xx.ii. worþ lond
 Though it right now / were faþ in myn hond 684
 He were a man / of soch discrecioun
 As þat ye ben / fy e on possessioun
 But yf a man / be vertuous withaþ /
 I haue my son subbed / and yitte shaþ 688
 ffor he to vertue / listeth nat to entende
 But for to pley at Dys / and dispende
 And lese aþ þat he hath / is his vsage
 And he hath leuer / talken with a page 692
 Than to commoun / with ony gentle wight/
 Where he myght lerne / gentilnes aright/
 Strawe for gentilnes / koth our Hoost/
 What ffrankeleyn / parde sir wele þou wost 696
 That ecch of you / mot tellen atte leest
 A tale or two / or breke his heest
 That knowe I wele sir / koth þe ffrankeleyn
 I pray you haueth me nat / in disdeyn 700

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Though to this man / I speke a word or two
 Tell on thy tale without / wordes mo /
 Gladly sir hoost koth he / I wolle obeye
 Vn-to *your* will / now herkeneth what I seye 704
 I wolle you nat contrarie in no wise
 As fer þat / all my wittes wolle suffice
 I pray to god / þat it may plesen you
 Than wote I wele / þat it is gode ynow 708

Hic desinit prologus de frankleyn

& Incipit fabula sua de Rokkes de Bretayne [Eg. 2726, on
leaf 147, bk.]

Thise old gentle Bretons / in her dayes
 Of diuers auentures / maden layes
 Romaunced in her first bretons tung
 Which laies / *with* her Instrumentes þey song 712
 Or els reden hem / for her plesaunce
 And one of hem / haue I in remembraunce
 Which I shaþ seyn / *with* gode wiþ / as I can [leaf 148]
 But sires / by-cause I am a boreþ man 716
 At my begynnyng/ first I you beseche
 Haue me excused of my rude speche
 I lerned neuer retoryk certeyn
 Thyng þat I speke / mot be bare and pleyñ 720
 I slepe neuere on the mount of *parnaso*
 Ne lerned neuer Marcus Tullyus Sythero
 Colours ne knowe I noon / *without* drede
 But soch colours / þat growen in the mede 724
 Or els soch as men dye / or peynt/
 Colours of Rethoryk/ ben to me queynt/
 My spirit feleþ nat of soch matere
 But yf you list/ my tale shuþ ye here 728

[THE TALE.]

IN Amoryk/ þat called is Bretayne
 There was a knyght / þat loued and did his peyne
 To serue a lady / in his best wise
 And many a labour / many a grete emprise 732
 [This page, Egerton 2726.]

He for his lady wrought/ or she were won
 ffor she was one / þe fairest vnder son
 And eke þere-to come / of so high kynrede
 That weþ vnethes/ durst þis knyght for drede 736
 Tell hir his wo / his peyn / and his distresse
 But at þe last / she for his worthynesse
 And namely / for his meke obeysaunce
 Hath soch a Pite caught/ of his penaunce 740
 That priuely / she felt of his accorde
 To take hym / for hir housbond and hir lord
 Of soch lordshipe / as men / han of her wyfes
 And for to lede the more in blys / her lyfes 744
 Of his free wiþ / he swore hir / as a knyght
 That neuer in aþ his lyue / he day ne night
 Ne shold vp-on hym take / no maistrie
 Ageyn hir wiþ / ne kithe hir ielousye 748
 But hir obeye / and folow hir wiþ/ in aþ
 As ony loue / vn-to his lady shaþ/
 Saue þat the name of soueraintee
 That wolþ he haue / for shame of his degree 752
 She thanked hym and with full grete Humblesse [Eg. ends]
 She seide sire / sithe of þoure gentillesse [Dd. 4. 24, leaf 129]
 þe profre me / to haue so large a reyne
 Ne wolde neuere god / bytwixte vs tweyne 756
 As in my gilt / were either werre or strif
 Sire / I wil be þoure humble / trewe wyf
 haue here my trouthe / til that myn herte breste
 Thus ben they bothe / in quiete and in reste 760
 ¶ ffor oo thyng sires / safly dar I seye
 That frendes / euerich other / mot obeye
 If they wiln longe / holden compaignye
 loue wol nat be constreyned / by maistrie 764
 Whan maistre cometh / god of loue a-noon
 Beteth hise wynges / and fare-wel he is gon
 loue is a thyng / as any spirit free
 Wómmen of kynde / desiren libertee 768

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

And nat to be constreyned / as a thral
 And so doon men / If I sooth seyn / shal
 loke who that most / is pacient in loue
 he is at his anauntage / al a-boue 772
 Pacience / is an heigh vertu / certeyn
 ffor it venquyssheth / alle theise clerkes seyn
 Thynges / that rigour shulde neuere ateyne
 ffor euery word / men moun nat chide or pleyne 776
 Lerneth to suffre / or elles so mot I gon
 3e shuln it lerne / wheiper so 3e wol or noon
 ffor in this world certeyn / there no wyght is
 That he ne doth or seith / somtyme amys 780
 Ire / sykenesse / or constellacioñ
 Wyn / woo / or chaungyng of complexioñ
 Causeth ful ofte / to don a-mys or spekyn
 On euery wrong / a man may nat be wrekyng 784
 After the tyme / must be temperaunce
 To euery wyght / that can on gouernaunce
 And therefore hath / this wys worthy knyght
 To lyue in ease / suffraunce hire behight 788
 And she to him / ful wysly gan to swere
 That neuere shulde there be / defaute in hire
 ¶ heere moun men sen / an humble wys accord
 Thus hath she take hire seruauñt / & hire lord 792
 Seruauñt in loue / and lord in mariage
 Thanne was he / bothe in lordshipe / & seruage
 Seruage nay / but in lordshipe a-boue
 Sithe he hath bothe / his lady and his loue 796
 His lady certes / and his wyf also [leaf 129, back]
 To which / that lawe of loue / accordeth to
 And whan he was / in this prosperitee
 hoom with his wyf / he gooth to his contree 800
 Nat fer fro Pedmarke / there his dwellyng was
 Where as he lyueth / in blisse and in solas
 ¶ Who coude telle / but he had wedded be
 The ioie / the ese / and the prosperitee 804

That is bytwixte / an husbonde / and his wyf
 A ȝere and more / lasteth this blisful lif
 Til that the knyght / of which I speke of thus
 That of kairud / was cleped Arueragus 808
 Shoope him to gon / and dwelled a ȝere or tweyne
 In Engelond / that cleped was eke Bretaigne
 To seke in armes / worshiþe and honour
 ffor al his lust / he sette in swich labour 812
 And dwelled there / the ȝere / the book seith thus
 ¶ Now wol I stynten / of this Arueragus
 And speken I wol / of Dorigen his wif
 That loueth hire husbonde / as hire hertes lyf 816
 ffor his absence / wepeth she and syketh
 As doon theise noble wyues / whan hem liketh
 She morneth / waketh / wayleth / fasteth / pleyneþ
 Desire of his presence / hire so destreyneth 820
 That al this wyde world / she sette at nought
 hire frendes / which that knewe / hire heuy thought
 Conforten hire / in al that euere they may
 They prechen hire / they tellen hire / nyght & day 824
 That causeles / she sleth hire self / alas
 And euery confort / possible in this cas
 They don to hire / with al here besynesse
 Al for to make hire leue / hire heuynesse 828
 ¶ By processe / as ȝe knowen euerychoñ
 Men moun so longe / grauen in a stoñ
 Til som figure / ther-Inne empreynted be
 So longe han they / comforted hire / til she 832
 Receyued hath / by hope and by reson
 The empryntyng / of hire consolacioñ
 Thurgh which / hire gret sorwe / gan a-swage
 She may nat alwey duren / in swich rage 836
 ¶ And eke Arueragus / in al this care
 hath sent hire lettres hom / of his welfare
 And that he wol come hastily / a-geyn
 Or elles had this sorwe / hire hert slayn 840

¶ hire frendes saugh / hire sorwe gan to slake
 And preyeden hire on knees / for goddes sake [leaf 130]
 To come and romen hire / in compaignye
 Away to dryue / hire derk fantasie 844
 And finally she graunted / that requeste
 ffor wel she saugh / that it was for the beste
 ¶ Now stood hire Castel / fast by the see
 And often with hire frendes / walketh she 848
 hire to disporte / vp-on the banke an heigh
 Where-as she many a ship / and barge seigh
 Seylyng here cours / where as hem list to goo
 But thanne was that / a parcel of hire woo 852
 ffor to hire self / ful ofte alas seith she
 Is there no ship / of so manye as I se
 Wil bryngen hom my lord / thanne were myn herte
 Al warissed / of hise bittre peynes smerte 856
 ¶ A-nother tyme / there wold she sitte and thynke
 And cast hire eighen / dounward fro the brynke
 But whan she seigh / the grisly Rokkes blake
 ffor verrey fere / so wold hire hert quake 860
 That on hire feet / she myght hire nought sustene
 Than wolde she sitte a-doun / vp-on the grene
 And pitously / in-to the See byholde
 And seyn right thus / with sorweful sikes colde 864
 Eterne god / that thurgh thy purueaunce
 ledest the world / by eterne gouernaunce
 In ydel as men seyn / 3e no thyng make
 But lord theise grisly / fendly rokkes blake 868
 That semen rather / a foul confusioñ
 Of werk / than any fair / creacioun
 Of swich a parfyt wys god / and a stable
 Why han 3e wrought this werk / vn-reasonable 872
 ffor by this werk / South / North / West ne Est
 Ther nys I-fostred no man / ne bryd ne beast
 It dooth no good / to my wytte / but annoyeth
 Se 3e nat lord / how mankynde it destroyeth 876

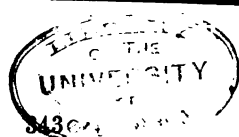
An hundred thousand bodyes / of man-kynde
 han Rokkes slayn / al be they nought in mynde
 Which mankynde is so faire / a part of thy werke
 That thou it madest / like to thyn owen merke 880
 Thanne semed it / 3e had a gret chierte
 Toward mankynde / but how thanne may it be
 That 3e swich menes make / it to destroyen
 Which menes do no good / but euere annoyen 884
 I wot wel / clerkes wiln seyn as hem lest
 By argumentez that al is for the best [leaf 130, back]
 Though I ne can the causes / nought I-knowe
 But thilke god / that made wynd to blowe 888
 As kepe my lord / this is myn conclusioun
 To clerkes lete I / al disputisioun
 But wolde god / that alle theise Rokkes blake
 Were sonken in-to helle / for his sake 892
 Theise Rokkes slen myn herte / for the fere
 Thus she seide / with many a pytous tere
 hire frendes saugh / that it was no disport
 To romen by the See / but discomfort 896
 And shopen for to pleyen / som-wher elles
 They leddyn hire by Ryuers / and by welles
 And eke in othere places / delitables
 They dauncen / and they pleyen at chesse / and tables
 ¶ So on a day / right in the morwe tyde 901
 vn-to a gardeyn / that was there beside
 In which they had mad / here ordinaunce
 Of vitaille / and of other purueaunce 904
 They gon and pleye hem / al the longe day
 And this was on the sexte morwe / of May
 Which May had peynted / with his softe shoures
 This gardeyn ful of leues / and of floures 908
 And craft of mannys hand / so curiously
 Arrayed had this gardeyn / trewely
 That neuere was there gardyn / of swich a prys
 But if it were / the verray Paradys 912

The odour of floures / and the fressh sight
 Wolde han maked / any hert light
 That euere was born / but if to gret sykenesse
 Or to gret sorwe / helde it in destresse 916
 So ful it was of beaute / with plesaunce 918
 At after dyner / gonne they to daunce 917
 And synge also / saue Dorigen allone
 Which made alwey / hire compleynt and hire mone 920
 ffor she ne saugh him / on the daunce goo
 That was hire husbonde / and hire loue also
 But natheless / she must a tyme a-byde
 And with good hope / late hire sorwe slyde 924
 ¶ Vp-on this daunce / amonges othere men
 Daunced a Squyer / byfore Dorigen
 That fresshere was / and Ioliere of array
 As to my doom / than is the monthe of May 928
 he syngeth / daunceth / passyng any man
 That is / or was / sihe that the world bygan
 There-with he was / if men shulde him discryue [leaf 131]
 On of the best faryng man / on lyue 932
 3ong / strong / right vertuous / and riche and wys
 And welhyloued / and holden in gret prys
 And shortly / if the sothe / I tellen shal
 vnwetyng of this / Dorigen at al 936
 This lusty squyere / seruaunt to venus
 Which that I-cleped was / Aurelius
 hadde loued hire best / of any creature
 Two 3ere and more / as was his auenture 940
 But neuere durst he tellen hire / his greuaunce
 With-uten cuppe he drank / al his penaunce
 he was dispeyred / nothyng durst he seye
 Saue in hise songes / somewhat wolde he wreye 944
 his woo / as in a gentil compleynyng
 he seide he loued / and was byloued no thyng
 Of which matere / made he many layes
 Songes / compleyntes / roundels / virelayes 948

how that he durst nat / his sorwe telle
 But languyssheth / as a fire doth in helle
 And deye he must / he seide / as dide Ekko
 ffor Narcisus / that durst nat telle hire wo 952
 In othere manere / than 3e heere me seye
 Ne durst he nat to hire / his woo bewreye
 Saue that peraventure / somtyme at daunces
 There 3onge folk kepen / here obseruaunces 956
 It may wel be / he loked on hire face
 In swych a wyse / as man that asketh grace
 But no thyng wist she / of his entent
 Natheles it happed / er they thens went 960
 Bycause that he was / hire neighebour
 And was a man of worshipe and honour
 And hadde I-knownen him / of tyme 3ore
 They fel in speche / and forth more and more 964
 vn-to that purpos / drough Aurelius
 And whan he saw his tyme / he seide thus
 ¶ Madame quod he / by god that this world made
 If that I wiste / it myght 3oure hert glade 968
 I wolde that day / that 3our Arueragus
 Went ouer the see / that I Aurelius
 hadde went / there neuere I shulde haue come ageyn
 ffor wel I woot / my seruyse is in veyn 972
 My gerdon is / but brestyng of myn herte
 Madame / reweth vp-on / my peynes smerte
 ffor with a word / 3e moun me slen or saue
 Heere at 3oure feet / god wolde that I were graue [ff. 181, bk.]
 I ne haue as now / no leiser more to seye 977
 haue mercy swete / or 3e wol do me deye
 ¶ She gan to loke vp / on Aurelius
 Is this 3oure wil quod she / and seye 3e thus 980
 Neuere erst quod she / ne wist I what 3e mente
 But now Aurelie / I knowe 3oure entente
 By thilke god / that 3af me soule and lyf
 Ne shal I neuere ben / an vntrewe wyf 984

In word ne werk / as fer as I haue wit
 I wol ben his / to whom that I am knyht
 Take this for fynal answer / as of me
 But after that in pley / thus seide she 988
 ¶ Aurelie quod she / by heigh god a-boue
 3et wolde I graunte 3ow / to ben 3oure loue
 Syn I 3ow se / so pitously compleigne
 loke what day / endelong Britaigne 992
 3e remoue alle the Rokkes / ston by ston
 That they ne lette shiþ / ne bot to gon
 I seye whan 3e han mad / the coost so clene
 Of Rokkes / that there nys no stoon I-sene 996
 Thanne wol I loue 3ow best / of any man
 haue heere my trouthe / in al that euere I can
 ¶ Is there non other grace in 3ow / quod he
 No by that lord quod she / that maked me 1000
 ffor wel I wot / that it shal neuere betide
 late swich folies / from 3oure herte slide
 What deynte / shulde a man han / in his lyf
 ffor to go loue / another mannes wyf 1004
 That hath hire body / whan so þat him liketh
 Aurelius ful ofte / sore siketh
 ¶ Woo was Aurelie / whan that he this herde
 And with a sorweful hert / he thus answerde 1008
 Madame quod he / this were an impossible
 Thanne moot I deye / of sodeyn detþ possible
 And with that word / he turned him a-noon
 Tho come hire othere frendes / many oon 1012
 And in the Aleyes / romeden vp and doun
 And nothyng wisten / of this conclusiõ
 But sodeynly bygonne / reuel newe
 Til that the bright sonne / lost his hewe 1016
 ffor thorisonte hath reft / the sonne his light
 This as meche to seye / as it was nyght
 And hoom they gon / in Ioye and in solas
 Saue onoly / wrecched Aurelius / Allas 1020

He to his hous is gon / with sorweful herte [leaf 133]
 he seeth he may nat / froo his deeth a-sterre
 hym semed that he felt / his hert colde
 vp to the heuene / hise hondes he gan holde 1024
 And on hise knees bare / he sette him down
 And in his rauyng / seide his orisoun
 ffor werray woo / out of his wyt he breide
 he nyste what he spak / but thus he seide 1028
 With pitous herte / his pleynt hath he bygonne
 vn-to the goddes / and first vn-to the Sonne
 ¶ he seide Apollo / god and gouernour
 Of euery plaunte / herbe / Tree and flour 1032
 That 3euest after / thy declynacioñ
 To eche of hem / his tyme and his sesoun
 As thyn herberwe chaungeth / lowe or heighe
 lord Phebus / cast thy mercyable eye 1036
 On wrecched Aurelie / which that am but lorn
 loo lord my lady / hath my deth I-sworn
 With-uten gilt / but thyn benygnetee
 vp-on my dedly hert / haue some pitee 1040
 ffor wel I woot / lord Phebus / if 3ow list
 3e moun me helpen / saue my lady best
 Now vouche-saf / that I may 3ow deuyse
 how that I may be holpen / and in what wyse 1044
 ¶ 3oure blisful suster / ^{let out luna} lucyna the shene
 That of the see / is chief goddes and quene
 Though Neptunus / haue deitee in the see
 3et emperesse a-bouen him / is she 1048
 3e knowen wel lord / that right as hire desire
 Is to be quyked and lighted / of 3oure fyre
 ffor which she folweth 3ow / ful besily
 Right to the see / desireth naturely 1052
 To folwen hire / as she that is goddessse
 Bothe in the See / and Ryuers more and lesse
 Wherefore lord Phebus / this is my requeste
 Do this myracle / or do myn herte breste 1056



That now next / at this apposicioun
 which in the signe shal be / of the leoun
 As preieth hire / so gret a flood to brynge
 That fyue fadme at the leste / it ouer springs 1060
 The heieste Rokke / in armoryk Brytayne
 And late this flode / endure 3eres tweyne
 Thanne certes to my lady / may I seye
 haldeth 3oure heste / the Rokkes ben a-weye 1064
 ¶ lord Phebus / do this myracle for me
 Preye hire she go / no fastere cours than 3e [leaf 132, back]
 I seye / preieth 3oure suster that she goo
 No faster cours than 3e / theise 3eres twoo 1068
 Thanne shal she ben euene / at the fulle alwey
 And spryng flood lastyng / bothe nyght and day
 And but she vouche-saf / in swich manere
 To graunte me / my souereigne lady deere 1072
 Preye hire to synken / euery Rokke a-doun
 In-to hire owen derk / region
 vnder the ground / there pluto dwelleth Inne
 Or neuere moo shal I / my lady wynne 1076
 Thy temple in delphos / wol I barfot seke
 lord Phebus / se the teeres on my cheke
 And of my peyne / haue som compassion
 And with that word / in sorwe he fel a-doun 1080
 And longe tyme he lay forth / in a traunce
 ¶ his brother which that knew / of his penaunce
 vp caughte him / and to bedde he hath him brought
 Dispeired in this turment / and this thought 1084
 late I this wooful creature / lye
 Chese he for me / wheiper he wil lyue or dye
 ¶ Arueragus with hele / and gret honour
 As he that was / of Chyualrie the flour 1088
 Is comen hom / and othere worthy men
 O bli[s]ful artow now / thow Dorigen
 That hast thy lusty housbonde / in thyne armes
 The fresshe knyght / the worthy man of armes 1092

That loueth the / as his owne hertes lyf
 No thyng list him / to ben ymagnityf
 If any wyght had spoke / whil he was oute
 To hire of loue / he ne hadde of it / no doute 1096
 he nought entendeth / to no swich matere
 But daunceth / Iusteth / maketh hire good chere
 And thus in ioye and blisse / I late hem dwelle
 And of the seke Aurelius / wol I telle 1100
 ¶ In langour / and in turment furious
 Two 3ere and more / lay wrecched Aurelius
 Er any foot / he myght on erthe goon
 Ne comfort in this tyme / had he noon 1104
 Saue of his brother / which that was a clerk
 he knew of al this woo / and al this werk
 ffor to noon other creature / certeyn
 Of this matere / he durst no word seyn 1108
 vnder his brest / he bare it more secree
 Than euere dide Pamphilus / for Galathee
 his brest was hole / with-oute for to sene
 But in his herte / ay was the arwe kene [leaf 123] 1112
 And wel 3e knowe / that of a sursanure
 In surgerie / is perilous the cure
 But men myght touche the arwe / or come ther-by
 his brother weep / and wailed preuily 1116
 Til at the laste / him fel in remembraunce
 That whiles he was / at Orleens in fraunce
 As 3onge clerkes / that ben likerous
 To reden artes / that ben curious 1120
 Seken in euery halke / and euery herne
 Particulere sciences / for to lerne
 he him remembred / that vp-on a day
 At Orlens / in studie / a book he say 1124
 Of magyk naturel / which his felawe
 That was that tyme / a bachelor of lawe
 Al were he there / to lerne a-nother craft
 hadde preuily / vp-on his deske I-laft 1128

Which book spak muchel / of the operaciouns
 Touchyng the xxviijth mansciouns
 That longeth to the mone / and swich folie
 As in our dayes / is nat worth a fleie 1132
 ffor holichirche feith / in oure byleue
 Ne suffreth noon illusion / vs to greue
 And whan this book / was in his remembraunce
 A-noon for ioye / his herte gan to daunce 1136
 And to him self / he seide priuely
 My brother shal be warissched / hastily
 ffor I am syker / that there be sciences
 By which men make / dyuerse apparences 1140
 Swich as theise subtile tregetoures / pleye
 ffor ofte atte festes / haue I wel herd seye
 That Tregetours / with-Inne an halle large
 han made come in / a water and a barge 1144
 And in the halle / rowen vp and doun
 Some tyme hath semed come / a grym leoun
 And somtyme floures springe / as in a Mede
 Somtyme a vyne and grapes / white & reede 1148
 Somtyme a castel / al of lyme and ston
 And whan him lyked / voided it a-noon
 Thus semed it / to euery mannes sight
 Now thazne conclude I thus / that if I myght 1152
 At Orliens / some olde felawe I-fynde
 That hadde this mones mansiouns / in mynde
 Or other magyk / naturel a-boue
 he shulde wel make my brother / haue his loue 1156
 ffor with an apparence / a Clerk may make
 To mannes sight / that alle the Rokkes blake [leaf 133, back]
 Of Britaygne / were I-voided euerychon
 And shippes by the brynke / come and gon 1160
 And in swich fourme / endure / a day or two
 Thanne were my brother warisschede / of his woo
 Thanne must she nedes holden / hire byheste
 Or elles he shal shame hire / atte the leste 1164

That loueth the / as his owne hert^{er} of this
 No thyng list him / to ben ym^{pr}
 If any wyght had spoke / w^{er} for to gon
 To hire of loue / he ne h^{er} a-noon 1168
 he nought entendeth / d / thanne is he fare
 But daunceth / Iust^{er} / of his care
 And thus in ioye^{er} come / almoost to that Citee
 And of the se^{er} / a two forlong or three 1172
 ¶ In langor^{er} Clerk romyng / by him self / they mette
 Two 3er^{er} that in latyn / thriftily hem grette
 Er ar^{er} after that he seide / a wonder thyng
 Ne^{er} knowe quod he the cause / of 3oure comyng 1176
 And er they farther^{er} / any foote wente
 he told hem al that was / in here entente
 ¶ This Britoun Clerk / him asked of felawes
 The which that he had knowe / in olde dawes 1180
 And he answered him / that they deede were
 ffor which he wep ful ofte / many a teere
 Doun of his hors / Aurelius light a-noon
 And with this Magicien / forth he is goon 1184
 hom to his hous / and maden hem wel att ese
 hem lakked no vitaille / that myght hem please
 So wel arrayed hous / as there was oon
 Aurelius in his lyf / saw neuere noon 1188
 he shewed him / er he wente to soupere
 fforestes Parkes / ful of wylde dere
 There saw he hertes / with here hornes heye
 The grettest / that euere was seyn / with eye 1192
 he saw of hem / an hundred slayn with houndes
 And some with arwes blede / of bittere woundes
 ¶ he saw whan voided were / the wilde deere
 Theise faucons / vp-on a fair Ryuere 1196
 That with here haukes / han the heroun slayn
 Tho saw he knyghtes / Iustyng in a pleyn
 And after this / he dide him swich plesaunce
 That he him shewed / his lady on a daunce 1200

On which him self he daunced / as him thought
 And whan this Maister / that this Magyk wrought (leaf 134)
 it was tyme / he clapt hise handes two
 And wel / al oure reuel was a-goo 1204
 And seued they neuere / out of the hous
 And they saugh / al this sight merueillous
 And at in his studie / there as hise bookes bee
 They seten stille / but no wyght / but they three 1208
 To him this maister called / his squyere
 And seide him thus / is redy oure soupere
 Almost an houre it is / I vndertake
 Sithe I 3ow bad / oure souper for to make 1212
 Whan that theise worthy men / wenten with me
 In-to my studie / there as my bookes be
 ¶ Sire quod this squyere / whan that it lyketh 3ow
 It is al redy / though 3e wol right now 1216
 Go we thanne soupe / quod he / for the beste
 Theise amorous folk / somtyme mot han here reste
 ¶ At after souper / fel they in trettee
 What somme / shulde this maistres / gerdoun be 1220
 To remeeuen alle the Rokkes / of Brytaigne
 And eke from gerounde / to the mouth of sayne
 he mad it straunge / and swor so god him saue
 lasse than a thou3sand pound / he wolde nat haue 1224
 Ne gladly for that somme / he wolde nat gon
 Aurelius / with blisful herte a-noon
 Answered thus / fy on a thousand pound
 This wide world / which that men seye is round 1228
 I wolde it 3eue / if I were lord of it
 This bargeyn is ful dreue / for we ben knyt
 3e shal be paid trewely / by my trouthe
 But loketh now / for no negligence / or slouthe 1232
 3e tarie vs heere / no lengere than to-morwe
 Nay quod this Clerk / haue heere my feith to borwe
 To bedde is gon Aurelius / whan him leste
 And wel ny al that nyght / he had his reste 1236

his tables tolletanes / forth he brought
 ful wel corrected / ne there lakked nought
 Neither his collect / ne his expans 3eres
 Ne hise rootes / ne hise othere geres 1276
 As ben hise centris / and hise argumentes
 And hise proporcionelles / conuenientes
 ffor hise equaciouns / in euery thyng
 And by hise eighte spere / in his werkyng 1280
 he knew ful wel / how fer alnath was shoue
 ffro the hed / of thilk fixe Aries a-boue
 That in the .ix. spere / considered is
 fful subtilly / he kalculated al this 1284
 Whan he had founde / his first mansioun
 he knewe the remenaunt / by proporcioun
 And knew the arisyng / of his Mone wel
 And in whos face and terme / and euerydel 1288
 And knewe ful wele / the Mones mansioun
 Acordaunt / to his operacioun
 And knew also / hise othere obseruaunces
 ffor which illusions / and swich meschaunces [leaf 135] 1292
 As hethen folk vseden / in thilke dayes
 ffor which no lengere / maketh he delayes
 But thurgh his Magyk / for a weke or tweye
 It semed / that alle the Rokkes / were aweye 1296
 ¶ Aurelius / which that 3et / despayred is
 Wheither he shal han his lyf / or fare amys
 A-wayteth nyght and day / on this myracle
 And whan he knew / that there was noon obstacle 1300
 That voided were theise Rokkes / euerychoñ
 Doun to his maistres feet / he fel a-noon
 And seide / I wooful wrecched Aurelius
 Thank 3ow lord / and lady myn / venus 1304
 That me han holpen / for my cares colde
 And to the Temple / his weye / forth hath he holde
 Where as he knew / he shulde his lady se
 And whan he saugh his tyme / a-noon right he 1308

With dredful herte / and with humble chere
 Salued hath / his souerayn lady dere
 ¶ My rightful lady / quod this wooful man
 Whom I moost drede and loue / as I best can 1312
 And lothest were / of al this world / displese
 Nere it that I / for 3ow haue swich disese
 That I must deyen heere / at 3oure foot a-noon
 Nought wolde I telle / how me is woo-bygon 1316
 But certes / either must I dye or pleyne
 3e sleen me giltles / for verray peyne
 But of my deth / though that 3e haue no routhe
 A-vyseth 3ow / er that 3e breke 3oure trouthe 1320
 Repenteth 3ow / for thilke god a-boue
 Or 3e me sleen / by-cause that I 3ow loue
 ffor Madame wel 3e woot / what 3e han hight
 Nat that I chalenge / any thyng of right 1324
 Of 3ow / my souerayn lady / but 3oure grace
 But in a gardeyn 3onder / at swich a place
 3e wot right wel / what 3e behighiten me
 And in myn hond / 3oure treuthe plight 3e 1328
 To loue me best / god wot 3e seide so
 Al be / that I vnworthy am ther-to
 Madame / I speke it for the honour of 3ow
 More than to saue / myn hertes lyf right now 1332
 I haue do so / as 3e comaunded me
 And if 3e vouchesaf / 3e may go se
 Doth as 3ow list / haue 3owre bihest in mynde [leaf 135, back]
 ffor quykke or ded / right there 3e shal me fynde 1336
 In 3ow lith al / to do me lyue or deye
 But wel I woot / the Rokkes ben a-weye
 he taketh his leue / and she astoned stode
 In al hire face / nas a drope of bloode 1340
 She wend neuere han come / in swich a trappe
 ¶ Allas quod she / that euere this shulde happe
 ffor wende I neuere / by possibilitee
 That such a moastre / or merueille myght be 1344

It is a-geyns / the processe of nature
 And hom she goth / a sorweful creature
 ffor verrey fere / vnethe may she goo
 She wepeth weyleth / al a day or two 1348
 And swoughneth / that it reuthe was to se
 But why it was / to no wyght told she
 ffor ought of tounne / was goon Arueragus
 But to hire self she spak / and seide thus 1352
 With face pale / and with ful sorweful chere
 In hire compleynte / as 3e shuln after heere
 Allas quod she / oon the fortune / I pleyne
 That vnwar / wrapped hast me / in thy cheyne 1356
 ffro which to escape / woot I no socoure
 Saue oonly deth / or ellis dishonoure [Latin note, p. 356.]
 Oon of theise two / bihoueth me to chese
 But natheles / 3et haue I leuere to lese 1360
 My lyf / than of my body haue a shame
 Or knowe my seluen false / or lese my name
 And with my deth / I may be quyte I-wys
 hath there nat / many a noble wyf er this 1364
 And many a mayde / I-slayn hire self / allas
 Rather than with hire body / do trespass
 ¶ 3is certes / lo peise stories beren wytnesse
 Whan thretty Tyrauntes / ful of cursednesse 1368
 had slayn Phidon / in Athenes atte feste
 They comaunded his doughtren / fort arreste
 And bryngen hem biforn him / in despit
 Al naked / to fulfille here foule delit 1372
 And in here fadres blod / they mad hem daunce
 Vp-on the pauement / god 3eue hem myschaunce
 ffor which theise wooful maydenes / ful of drede
 Rathere than they wold lese / here maydenhede 1376
 They pryuely ben stirt / in-to a welle
 And dreynt hem seluen / as the bookes telle
 ¶ They of Metene / lete enquere and seke
 Of lacedomye / fifty maydenes eke 1380

On which they wolden doon / here lecherie [leaf 136]
 But was there noon / of al that companye
 That she nas slayn / and with a good entente
 Ches rather for to deye / than assente 1384
 To ben oppressed / of here maydenhede
 Why shulde I thanne to dye / ben in drede
 lo eke the Tiraunt / Aristoclides
 That loued a mayden / hight Stymphalides 1388
 Whan that hire fader / slayn was / on a nyght
 Vn-to Dianes temple / gooth she right ¶ Iouinianum
 And hente the ymage / in hire handes twoo
 ffro which ymage / wold she neuere goo [Latin note, p. 356.]
 ¶ No wight ne myght / hire handes of it arrace 1393
 Til she was slayn / right in the selue place
 Now sithe that maydenes / hadden swich despit
 To ben defouled / with mannes foule delit 1396
 Wel ought I wyf / rather my seluen slee
 Than be defouled / as it thynketh me
 What shal I seyn / of Hasterubales wyf
 That at Cartage / byrafte hire selue hire lif 1400
 ffor whan she saw / that Romeyns wan the Toun
 She took hire children alle / and skipte a-doun
 In-to the fire / and ches rathere to deye
 Than any Romayn / dide hire velanye 1404
 ¶ hath nat lucesse / I-slayn hire self allas
 At Rome / whan she oppressed was
 Of Tarquyn / for hire thoughte it was a shame
 To lyuen / whan she had lost hire name 1408
 ¶ The Seuene Maydenes / of Melesie also
 han slayn hem self / for verrey drede and woo
 Rather than folk of Sawle / hem shulde oppresse
 moo than a thousand stories / as I gesse 1412
 Coude I now telle / as touchyng this matere
 ¶ Whan habradate was slayn / his wyf so deere
 hire seluen slow / and leet hire blood to glide
 In-habradeces woundes / depe and wyde 1416

And seide my body / atte þe leste weye
 There shal no wyght defoulen / if I maye
 What shulde I moo ensaumples / here-of sayn
 Sithe that so manye / han hem seluen slayn 1420
 Wel rathere than they wolde / defouled be
 I wol conclude / that it is bet for me
 To sleen my self / than be defouled thus
 I wol be trewe / vn-to Arueragus 1424
 Or rather slee my self / in some manere
 As dide Democienis / doughter dere [leaf 136, back]
 By-cause that she wolde nought / defouled be
 ¶ O Cedasus / it is ful greet pitee 1428
 To reden how thyne doughtren deyeden / allas
 That slown hem self / for suche manere cas
 ¶ As greet pitee was it / or wel more
 The Theban Mayden / that for Nichamore 1432
 hire seluen slough / right for such manere woo
 ¶ An-other Theban mayden / did right so
 ffor oon of Macedoigne / had hire oppressed
 She with hire deth / hire maydenhod redressed 1436
 ¶ What shal I seyn / of Nyceates wyf
 That for such cas / byrefte hir self hir lyf
 ¶ how trewe eke was / Alcebiades
 his loue / that rathere for to dyen chees 1440
 Than for to suffre his body . vnberied be
 ¶ loo which a wyf / was Alceste quod she
 ¶ What seith Omere / of goode Penelopee
 Al grece knoweth / of hire chastitee 1444
 ¶ Parde of laodomia / is wryten thus
 That whan at Troie / was slayn Protheselaus
 No lengere wolde she lyue / after his day
 ¶ The same of noble Portia / telle I may 1448
 With-out Brutus / coude she nat lyue
 To whom she had al hool / hire herte 3yue
 ¶ The parfyt wyfhod / of Arthemese
 honoured is / thorough al the Barbarye 1452

¶ O Theuta Quene / thy wyfly chastitee
 To alle wyues / may a myrour be
 [. no gap in the MS: these lines
 known only in Ellesmere MS.] 1456
 Thus pleynd Dorigen / a day or tweye
 Purposyng euere / that she wolde deye
 But nathelees / vp-on the thridde nyght
 hoom come Arueragus / this worthy knyght 1460
 And axed hire / why that she wepe so sore
 And she gan wepen / euere the lengere the more
 Allas quod she / that euere was I born
 Thus haue I seide quod she / thus haue I sworñ 1464
 And told him al / as ȝe han herd byfore
 It nedeth nat / reherce it ȝow no more
 ¶ This housbond with glad chere / and frendly wyse
 Answered & seide / as I shal ȝow deuyse 1468
 Is there out elles / Dorigen but this
 Nay nay quod she / god help me so as wys
 This is to meche / and it were goddis wylle [leaf 187 gone]
 Ye wyf koth he / let slepen that is stifi [Eg. 2726, on leaf 157]
 It may be wele / peraventure yitte to-day
 ye shult your trouth hold by my fay
 ffor god so wisly / haue mercy vpon me
 I hade wele leuer / stikkeð for to be 1476
 For verray loue / which that I to you haue [leaf 157, back]
 But yf / ye shold your trouth / kepe and save
 Trouth is the hiest thyng / þat man may kepe
 But with þat word he brast anon to wepe 1480
 And seid / I you forbode vp-on peyn of deeth
 That neuer while you / lasteth lyf or breth
 To no wight / tell þou of this auenture
 As I may best / I wolt my wo endure 1484
 Ne make no countenance / of hevynes
 That folk of you / mow deme harme or gesse
 And forth he cleped a squyer / and a meid
 Goth forth anon / with Dorigen he seid 1488
 [Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

And bryng hir / to soch a place anon
 They take her leue / and on her wey pey gon
 But pey ne wist/ why she theder went
 He nold no wight/ tell his intent' 1492

[.

 1496

. *no gap in the MS.: these lines*
 *known only in the Ellesmere MS.]*

This Squyer / which pat hight Aurelius
 On Dorigen / that was so amerus 1500
 Of auenture / happed hir to mete

Amyd the toun / right in þe quykkeste strete
 And she was boun / to go the wey forth right/
 Toward the gardyn / there as she hade hight/ 1504

And he was to þe / gardynward also
 ffor wele he spied / whan she wold go
 Out of hir hous / to ony maner place
 But þus pey mette / of auenture or grace 1508

And he salueth hir / with gode intent
 And axed of hir / whider-ward she went/
 And she answered / half as she were mad
 Vn-to the gardyn as myn housbond bad 1512

My trouth for to hold / Allas Allas
 Aurelius gan wonder / on þis caas.
 And in his hert/ hade grete compassioun
 Of hir / and hir lamentacioun 1516

And of Arueragus / þe worthy knyght
 That bade hir hold / all pat she hade hight
 So loth hym was / his wif / shold breke hir treuth
 And in his hert / he caught of þis grete reuth 1520

Consideryng/ þe best / on euery side
 That from his lust / yitte leuer were hym bide
 Than don so heigh / a / cherlyssh wrecchednes [leaf 158]
 Ayeinst / fraunchise / and all gentilles 1524

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

for which in fewe wordes / seid he þus
 Madame seith to your lord / Arueragus
 That seth I se / his grete gentilles
 To you / and eke / I se wele / your distres 1528
 That hym were leuer haue shame / and þat were reuth
 Than ye to me / shold breke þus your treuth
 I haue wele leuer euer to suffre wo
 Than I depart the love / bitwene you two 1532
 I you relese madame / in-to your honde
 Quyte euery surement / And euery bonde
 That ye han made / to me / as here-byforn
 Seth thylk tyme / which þat ye were born 1536
 My trouth I plight / I shaþ you neuer repreue
 Of no byhest / and here I take my leue
 As of þe truest / and þe best wyf
 That euer yitte / I knew in all my lyf 1540
 But euery wyf / be ware / of hir byhest
 On Dorigen / remembreth atte lest
 Thus can a Squyer don a gentile dede
 As wele / as can a knyght without drede 1544
 She thanketh hym / vpon her knees bare
 And home to hir housbond / is she fare
 And told hym aþ / as ye han herd me seid
 And be ye siker / he was so wele appeid 1548
 That it were impossible / me to write
 What shold I lenger / of þis caas endite
 Arueragus / and Dorigen his wyf
 In souerayn blys / leden forth her lyf 1552
 Neuer eft / was þere angre / hem bitwene
 He cherissheth hir / right as she were a quene
 And she was to hym true / for euermore
 Of thise .ij. folk / ye gete of me no more 1556
 Aurelius / þat his cost / hath aþ forlorn
 Curseth the tyme / þat euer was he born
 Allas koth he / allas that I behight
 Of pured gold a M^l. pound of wight 1560

[This page, Egerton 2726.]

Vn-to this Philisophre / how shaft I do
 I sey no more / but þat I am fordo
 Myn heritage mot I nedes sell [leaf 158, back]
 And ben a begger / here may I nat dwell / [Eg. ends] 1564
 And shamen al my kynrede / in this place [Dd. 4. 24, leaf 188]
 But I of hym / myght gete bettre grace
 But natheles / I wyl of hym assaye
 At certeyne dayes / ȝere by ȝere to paye 1568
 And thanke him / of his grete curteisie
 My trouthe wil I kepe / I wyl nought lye
 ¶ With herte sore / he gooth vn-to his coffre
 And brought gold / vn-to his Philisophre 1572
 The value of fyue hundred pound / I gesse
 And him bisecheth / of his gentillesse
 To graunt him dayes / of the remenaunt
 And seide Maister / I dar wel make auaunt 1576
 I failed neuere / of my trouthe / as ȝet
 ffor sikerly my dette / shal be quyt
 Towardes ȝow / how euere that I fare
 To goon a begged / in my kirtel bare 1580
 But wolde ȝe vouche-sauf / vp-on seuretee
 Two ȝere or thre / for to respiten me
 Thanne were I wel / for elles mot I selle
 Myn heritage / ther nys na more to telle 1584
 ¶ This Philisophre / sobrelly answerde
 And seide thus / whan he theise wordes herde
 haue I nat holden / couenaunt vn-to the
 ¶ Ȝis certes / wel and trewely / quod he 1588
 hast thow nat had thy lady / as the liketh
 ¶ No no quod he / and sorwefully he syketh
 What was the cause / telle me if thow can
 ¶ Aurelius his tale / a-noon bygan 1592
 And told him al / as ȝe han herd bifore
 It nedeth nat to ȝow / reherce it more
 ¶ he seide Arueragus / of gentillesse
 hadde leuere dye / in sorwe and in distresse 1596

[Part of this page, Egerton 2726.]

Than that his wyf / were of hir trouthe fals
 The sorwe of Dorigene / he told him als
 how loth hire was / to ben a wykked wyf
 And that she lost had leuere / that day / hir lyf 1600
 And that hir trouthe / she swor of Innocence
 She neuere erst / had herd speke / of apparence
 That mad him han of hire / so gret pitee
 And right as freely / as he sent hir me 1604
 [MS. torn] sent I hire / to him a-geyn
 [„] some / ther nys na more to seyn
 [„] hre / answerd leue brother
 [„] dide gentilly to other 1608
 Thow art a Squyer / and he is a knyght [leaf 133, back]
 But god forbede / for his blisful myght
 But if a Clerk / coude doon a gentil dede
 As wel as any of 3ow / it is no drede 1612
 ¶ Sire I relese the / thy thousand pound
 As thow right now / were copen out of the ground
 Ne neuere er now / ne haddest knowen me
 ffor sire / I wol nat take / a peny of the 1616
 ffor al my craft / ne nought for my trauaille
 Thow hast I-paid wel / for my vitaille
 It is I-now / and farewel haue good day
 And toke his hors / & forth he goth his way 1620
 lordynges this question / than wil I axe now
 Which was the moost free / as thynketh 3ow
 Now telleth me / or that 3e ferthere wende
 I can namore / my tale is at an ende ¶ Amen. 1624
 Here endeth the ffrankeleyns tale:

p. 351, l. 1358. ¶ 30. Athenientium traxi cum phidone nec-
 cessant in conuiuio filias eius virgines ad se venire iusserunt &
 scortorum more nudari / Ac super pauimenta patris sanguine ornu-
 tatas inpudicis gestibus ludere / que paulisper dissimulato dolore
 cum temulentos conuiuas cernerent quasi ad requisita nature egredi-
 entes inuicem se complexere precipitauerunt in puteum vt virgini-
 tatem morte seruarent! [leaf 135, back]

p. 352, l. 1392. ¶ Singulas has historias & plures hanc materi-
 am concernentes recitat Beatus Ieronimus contra Iouinianum in
 primo suo libro cap. 39. [leaf 136]



14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED
LOAN DEPT.

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